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NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

**NATO OR NEUTRALITY?: DECISIONS BY DENMARK,
FINLAND, NORWAY, AND SWEDEN**

by

Kevin A. Chaney

September 2017

Thesis Advisor:
Second Reader:

David S. Yost
James Clay Moltz

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			<i>Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188</i>	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington, DC 20503.				
1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)		2. REPORT DATE September 2017		3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Master's thesis
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE NATO OR NEUTRALITY?: DECISIONS BY DENMARK, FINLAND, NORWAY, AND SWEDEN			5. FUNDING NUMBERS	
6. AUTHOR(S) Kevin A. Chaney				
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A			10. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government. IRB number ____N/A____.				
12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release. Distribution is unlimited.			12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE	
13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words) Although Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden are ethnically and culturally similar, and all relied on neutrality to protect their sovereignty prior to the Second World War, Denmark and Norway sought protection from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) after the war while Finland and Sweden still remain outside the Alliance. This thesis explores the reasons for these diverging paths before discussing what might cause Finland and Sweden to join NATO in the future. The thesis finds that recent Russian aggression has pushed Finland and Sweden closer than ever to seeking membership, and concludes that they will probably join the Alliance eventually, but only after their general elections in 2019 and 2018, respectively, at the earliest. Additionally, the thesis notes that Finland is a stronger proponent for non-alignment, while Sweden is increasingly pushing the duo toward NATO membership. Furthermore, the research indicates that the NATO Allies would welcome these two countries into the Alliance if they sought membership. U.S. foreign policy might most effectively encourage Finnish and Swedish membership by avoiding bilateral security guarantees with them, supporting fact-based public debates in the countries, and engaging with their governments.				
14. SUBJECT TERMS NATO, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, enlargement			15. NUMBER OF PAGES 99	
			16. PRICE CODE	
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE Unclassified	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT Unclassified	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UU	

NSN 7540-01-280-5500

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 2-89)
Prescribed by ANSI Std. Z39-18

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**NATO OR NEUTRALITY?: DECISIONS BY DENMARK, FINLAND, NORWAY,
AND SWEDEN**

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Lieutenant, United States Navy
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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY STUDIES
(EUROPE AND EURASIA)**

from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
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ABSTRACT

Although Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden are ethnically and culturally similar, and all relied on neutrality to protect their sovereignty prior to the Second World War, Denmark and Norway sought protection from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) after the war while Finland and Sweden still remain outside the Alliance. This thesis explores the reasons for these diverging paths before discussing what might cause Finland and Sweden to join NATO in the future. The thesis finds that recent Russian aggression has pushed Finland and Sweden closer than ever to seeking membership, and concludes that they will probably join the Alliance eventually, but only after their general elections in 2019 and 2018, respectively, at the earliest. Additionally, the thesis notes that Finland is a stronger proponent for non-alignment, while Sweden is increasingly pushing the duo toward NATO membership. Furthermore, the research indicates that the NATO Allies would welcome these two countries into the Alliance if they sought membership. U.S. foreign policy might most effectively encourage Finnish and Swedish membership by avoiding bilateral security guarantees with them, supporting fact-based public debates in the countries, and engaging with their governments.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

A2/D2	anti-access / area denial
ACE	Arctic Challenge Exercises
BALTOPS	Baltic Operations
EU	European Union
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NORDEFCO	Nordic Defense Cooperation
OEEC	Organization for European Economic Cooperation
PfP	Partnership for Peace
SDU	Scandinavian Defense Union
UN	United Nations

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost I would like to thank my wife, Gabriela, for her constant support and delicious cooking that kept me going through the long hours of research and writing that went into this project.

I would also like to express my deepest appreciation to my thesis advisor, Dr. David Yost, for his superb guidance and editing throughout this process, and to my second reader, Dr. Clay Moltz, for helping me originally come up with the idea for this thesis and helping to develop it along the way.

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I. INTRODUCTION

This thesis identifies factors that have influenced states to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) or abstain from seeking membership in the Alliance, examining the Nordic states of Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden as case studies. Although these countries are ethnically and culturally similar, they have made different foreign policy decisions regarding neutrality and NATO, and this thesis investigates why they have done so.

This thesis is timely because recent Russian aggression under President Vladimir Putin has encouraged widespread questioning of the value of neutrality in both Finland and Sweden. Helsinki and Stockholm have increased their bilateral military cooperation as well as their partnership activities with NATO. After analyzing key historical factors in each case study, the thesis identifies current factors that might lead Finland and Sweden to follow in the footsteps of their Nordic neighbors and join NATO. The primary questions the thesis addresses are: Why did Denmark and Norway join NATO while Finland and Sweden did not, and what developments might lead Finland and Sweden to join the Alliance in the future?

A. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

Given the emergence of Russia as a revisionist power that is pursuing aggressive foreign policies, understanding why Finland and Sweden have yet to join NATO and what might lead them to reverse their decisions in this regard is of critical importance. From a strategic standpoint, Finland and Sweden would be vital in any NATO defense of the Baltic states if Moscow decided to attack them, especially given the Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD) strategy that the Russians would probably employ at Kaliningrad and elsewhere. Under current circumstances, such a strategy might prevent NATO reinforcements from effectively reaching the Baltic states, but operations involving Finnish and Swedish forces, territory, and territorial waters might enable NATO to defend the Baltic states.

Furthermore, the geopolitical and strategic shift that Finland or Sweden (or both) joining NATO would represent would be enormous—as significant as their decisions to remain neutral since the late 1940s have been. Choosing to join NATO would probably affect their political and strategic positioning for a long time to come, and would not be just an incremental step in their increasingly active partnerships with NATO.¹ It would mean an Article 5 collective defense commitment with the other Allies.² Additionally, if Finland joined the Alliance, Russia’s border with NATO countries would double in size, further restricting Russian influence in the Nordic region, increasing Western influence in it, and adding a front to any war Russia might initiate against NATO.³ Such a move would also signal a defeat for Russian foreign policy, as the Russians have strongly opposed any further NATO enlargement.

Lastly, although it is not the primary aim of this thesis, the thesis will also contribute to the broader theoretical discussions regarding why countries join alliances or choose not to join them, and whether and why Finland and Sweden might join NATO in particular. This topic is broad, multi-disciplinary, and extremely important, because the associated questions have significant policy implications and affect international relations on a continuing basis.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Although individual histories have been written about Danish, Finnish, Norwegian, and Swedish foreign policies as they relate to the Cold War period, a comparative study examining why two of these Nordic countries were founding members of NATO and two others have remained outside the Alliance has never been published. Furthermore, few works have been published in English that directly address why Finland and Sweden did not join the Alliance as founding members, and the studies that mention the question often simply say that they decided to remain neutral without

¹ Mats Bergquist et al., “The Effects of Finland’s Possible NATO Membership,” The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, April 2016, <http://formin.finland.fi/public/default.aspx?contentid=345685>, 57.

² “The North Atlantic Treaty,” North Atlantic Treaty Organization, March 21, 2016, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_17120.htm.

³ Bergquist et al., “The Effects,” 47.

exploring or explaining the factors that led to these decisions. Consequently, there is much to be studied in this area.

Many works of scholarship, however, have investigated why Finland and Sweden have not joined NATO in the post–Cold War era, and why they should or should not join. Some analyses have considered the likelihood of either state joining, and what might cause them to do so. Few of these studies have analyzed these questions with an eye toward history, however; and this will be the unique perspective of this thesis.

The most popular explanation for Denmark’s decision to join NATO is that the Danish experience during the Second World War caused Danes to lose faith in their traditional policy of neutrality, and that an increasingly volatile Cold War led them to seek cover under the protective umbrella of the United States.⁴ The main arguments behind this line of thinking are that after the war the Danes had an almost non-existent military, were positioned on the front line of any future East-West conflict, and had only recently regained their sovereignty. The combination of these factors caused the Danes to feel extremely vulnerable in facing an increasingly aggressive Soviet Union, and led them into the Alliance.

A second explanation offered for Denmark’s decision is that the United States strongly desired Denmark’s participation in the Alliance, especially due to its possession of Greenland, and consequently intervened in the Swedish-led talks regarding the possible formation of a Scandinavian Defense Union (SDU).⁵ Such a union would have linked Denmark, Norway, and Sweden in a military alliance that would not necessarily have involved the major Western powers. According to some accounts, the United States wished to prevent such an alliance from forming, so Washington informed the Nordic countries that a neutral SDU could not count on an ability to purchase American military

⁴ See Juhana Aunesluoma, *Britain, Sweden and the Cold War, 1945–1954: Understanding Neutrality* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Max Jakobson, *Finnish Neutrality: A Study of Finnish Foreign Policy Since the Second World War* (London: Hugh Evelyn Limited, 1968); Johan Stenfeldt, “Positioning in the Cold War: Swedish and Danish History Textbooks and the Totalitarianism Doctrine: Historical Cultures in Comparison,” *Scandinavian Journal of History* 37, no. 4 (2012) 505–525; Mikael Nilsson, “Amber Nine: NATO’s Secret Use of a Flight Path over Sweden and the Incorporation of Sweden in NATO’s Infrastructure,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 44, no.2 (2009), doi: 10.1177/0022009408101252.

⁵ See Aunesluoma, *Britain, Sweden and the Cold War*; Nilsson, “Amber Nine.”

supplies.⁶ This move, some observers hold, brought an end to the potential Scandinavian alliance and left Denmark and Norway little choice but to either join NATO or pursue a neutral course on the model of Finland or Sweden.⁷

An opposing narrative argues that the SDU talks fell apart not because of external pressure, but due to disagreements between Norway and Sweden.⁸ While Norway was unwilling to accept an SDU that was not linked to Western (and specifically American) support, Sweden was just as determined that the SDU should be neutral in the broader East-West struggle. Scholars disagree on Denmark's orientation concerning the SDU, but generally agree that it ultimately did not matter because Norway's and Sweden's inability to reach an accord caused the talks to collapse. Consequently, Denmark was left to decide between NATO and a neutrality it no longer trusted, making the decision easy.

A final reported element in Denmark's decision to join NATO is that it was essentially a given that Denmark wanted to join the Alliance, given its security concerns outlined earlier, but that an internal debate within the British government ultimately resulted in the invitation to Denmark to join the Alliance.⁹ Some observers maintain, however, that the assumption that Britain wanted Denmark and Norway in the Alliance is incorrect, since there was much internal debate over the issue.¹⁰ On the other hand, this interpretation of events seems to assume that Denmark and Norway wanted to join the Alliance if invited. Thus, it was primarily Britain's decision to support their inclusion that led Denmark and Norway to join the Alliance as founding members.

The published explanations for Norway's decision to join NATO are the same as those for Denmark, with the exception of the most widely accepted argument: Norway

⁶ Nilsson, "Amber Nine," 289.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ See Thorsten B. Olesen, "The Dilemmas of Interdependence: Danish Foreign Policy 1945–1972," *Journal of European Integration History* 7, no. 2 (2001), 37–63; Thorsten B. Olesen, "Scandinavian Security Alignments 1948–1949 in the DBPO Mirror," *Scandinavian Journal of History* 37, no. 2 (2012), 185–197.

⁹ See Martin H. Folly, "Protecting the Northern Flank, or Keeping the Cold War out of Scandinavia?: British Planning and the Place of Norway and Denmark in a North Atlantic Pact, 1947–9," *The International History Review* 34, no. 1, 45–69, doi: 10.1080/07075332.2012.620239.

¹⁰ Ibid., 46–47.

received warnings from three sources in March 1948 that the Soviets were going to try to force Oslo to sign a non-aggression pact, and this led Norwegians to support the creation of a Western alliance, which they joined upon its founding barely a year later.¹¹ This interpretation paints the simple picture that one action, the rumored impending Soviet pressure for a pact with Norway, led to the creation of NATO with Norway as a founding member.

The arguments for why Finland did not join NATO are more generally agreed upon than the arguments outlined for why Denmark and Norway did join the Alliance. The literature that addresses this question for Finland varies primarily in emphasis, and this is largely determined by the analytical perspective chosen by the authors. Three perspectives stand out: that of the Finns, that of the Western powers, and that of outside observers.

Scholars arguing from the Finnish perspective emphasize that Finland did not join NATO because the Finns believed that their best hope for maintaining independence was to form a positive relationship with the Soviet Union aimed at a non-threatening, peaceful co-existence. The primary rationale behind this reasoning is typically that Finland lost trust in the leading Western powers when they did not assist Helsinki in the Winter War or in negotiating beneficial terms in the Treaty of Paris. Consequently, after the Second World War, Finland found itself without reliable security partners, forcibly demilitarized by the Soviet Union, and thus unable to defend against any Soviet attack. Finland's only hope of surviving with a degree of political independence, then, was to placate the Soviets and hope for the best.¹²

¹¹ Folly, "Protecting the Northern Flank," 50. For more on those who argued this point, see Hastings Lionel Ismay, *NATO: The First Five Years* (Paris: North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 1955); Don Cook, *Forging the Alliance: NATO 1945 to 1950* (London: Arbor House, 1989), 125; Olav Riste, "Was 1949 a Turning Point? Norway and the Western Powers 1947–1950," in *Western Security: the Formative Years. European and Atlantic Defence 1947–1953*, ed. Olav Riste (Oslo: Norwegian University Press, 1985), 139; Tony Insall and Patrick Salmon, "Preface to the Nordic Countries: From War to Cold War, 1944–1951," *Scandinavian Journal of History* 37, no. 2 (2012): 136–155, doi: 10.1080/03468755.2012.666643.

¹² See Aunesluoma, *Britain, Sweden and the Cold War*; Jakobson, *Finnish Neutrality*; Klaus Törnudd, "Finnish Neutrality Policy during the Cold War," *The SAIS Review of International Affairs* 25, no. 2 (Summer 2005), 43–52; Tuomo Polvinen, D.G. Kirby and Peter Herring (ed. and trans.), *Between East and West*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.

From the Western perspective, on the other hand, scholars have emphasized that Finland was never given a chance to join NATO, since Western politicians and strategists had written Finland off as lost to the Soviets after the Finns signed the Finnish-Soviet Treaty of 1948. Since Finland never received an invitation, it could not have joined NATO regardless of any other factors.¹³

Lastly, analyses performed by neutral observers have led some scholars to simply say that Finland could not join a Western alliance because the Soviets would not allow it. Finland was still paying Moscow heavy war reparations, and until 1956 Finland hosted a Soviet military base at the port of Porkkala, a mere 10 miles from Helsinki.¹⁴ Furthermore, the Finnish-Soviet Treaty of 1948, signed a year before NATO was formed, contained text that would have prevented Finland from joining the Alliance from a legal perspective.¹⁵

The arguments for why Sweden remained non-aligned and did not join NATO are perhaps more varied than those for any of the other countries under consideration in this thesis. These arguments include the suggestion that Sweden was not actually neutral at all, but rather acted like an unofficial member of the Alliance, the thesis that Sweden was acting in accordance with the theory of a “Nordic Balance,” the assertion that Swedish leaders maintained a policy of non-alignment due to domestic political concerns or because of its historical success in protecting Sweden, and the proposition that Sweden’s Minister of Foreign Affairs during the creation of NATO, Östen Undén, would simply not budge from a policy of non-alignment.

The argument that Sweden was not truly neutral during the Cold War stems from a variety of secret moves that Swedish politicians and military officials made either to benefit NATO or to prepare to fight a war on its side. This cooperation with the West has led many scholars to argue that Sweden’s policy of non-alignment in peace aimed at

¹³ See Aunesluoma, *Britain, Sweden and the Cold War*.

¹⁴ Törnudd, “Finnish Neutrality Policy,” 43.

¹⁵ An analysis of the treaty’s impact may be found in Törnudd, “Finnish Neutrality Policy.”

neutrality in war “should be viewed as illusional, if not outright fraudulent.”¹⁶ An analysis of this argument is provided by Ulf Bjereld and Ann-Marie Ekengren in their study “Cold War Historiography in Sweden.”¹⁷

The “Nordic Balance” theory argues that the Nordic countries were able to work together as a unit, at times knowingly and at other times passively, to balance the Eastern and Western powers’ influences in the region during the Cold War. With Denmark and Norway in NATO, and Finland under the thumb of the Soviet Union, the theory maintains that Sweden served as a crucial moderator between the two sides.¹⁸ Danish and Norwegian politicians used this argument to justify their refusal to allow NATO bases on their soil in peacetime, since doing so, they argued, would lead the Soviet Union to increase its influence in Finland.¹⁹ Similarly, Swedish politicians argued that if Sweden joined NATO then Finland would become a satellite state of the Soviet Union.²⁰ Scholars such as Krister Wahlback have taken these Swedish politicians at their word and have argued that this rationale led the majority of Swedes, both in and out of the government, to argue against joining NATO in order to protect Finnish independence.²¹ Others, such as Finnish Cold War diplomat and author Max Jakobson, have argued against this idea, saying that it makes as much sense as declaring that “Finland fought to retain her independence in order to make it easier for Sweden to stay neutral.”²²

The common argument that Sweden did not join NATO because of domestic political reasons contains many sub-arguments. Some scholars have maintained that

¹⁶ Ulf Bjereld and Ann-Marie Ekengren, “Cold War Historiography in Sweden,” in *The Cold War and the Nordic Countries: Historiography at a Crossroads*, ed. Thorsten B. Olesen (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2004), 143.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., 154.

¹⁹ See Robert Dalsjö, “The Hidden Rationality of Sweden’s Policy of Neutrality during the Cold War,” *Cold War History* 14, no. 2 (2014): 177, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14682745.2013.765865>.

²⁰ Dalsjö, “The Hidden Rationality,” 177; Olesen, “Scandinavian Security Alignments,” 190.

²¹ Krister Wahlback, “Nordic Solidarity—a Problematic Affair,” in *Friends in Need: Towards a Swedish Strategy of Solidarity with her Neighbours*, ed. Bo Hugemark, (Stockholm: Royal Swedish Academy of War Sciences, 2012), 47–48.

²² Jakobson, *Finnish Neutrality*, 91.

Sweden's long tradition of non-alignment led to it being the only policy that politicians could agree on.²³ Others have claimed that most Swedes simply believed that continuing their policy of non-alignment would keep them out of any East-West war, just as it had kept them out of the Second World War.²⁴ Lastly, Robert Dalsjö argues that the Swedes understood that they would be forced by circumstances into fighting alongside the NATO aligned countries in any war with the Soviet Union, but they remained non-aligned in peace because they wished to remain out of any nuclear exchange between the two sides and trusted that their traditional policy of neutrality could accomplish this.²⁵

Finally, Aunesluoma points out that the British, after many failures to persuade Sweden to join NATO as a founding member, concluded that Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs Östen Undén was the key to Stockholm's refusal to shift away from a policy of non-alignment. Undén reportedly believed that if Sweden aligned with the West then the Soviets would see Sweden as a threat, which "would be disastrous."²⁶ Consequently, the British Foreign Office concluded that "as long as Undén was in charge, fundamental changes in Swedish foreign policy would be highly unlikely."²⁷

The existing works that address the question of what might cause Finland and Sweden to join NATO are varied in their conclusions. Ann-Sophie Dahl argues that Sweden will only join NATO if Finland joins and forces Stockholm's hand, since many Swedes believe neutrality has always served them well.²⁸ Jannicke Fiskvik, however, argues that both Finland and Sweden might join NATO if Russia moves aggressively towards the Baltic states.²⁹ Andrew Wolff is even more optimistic about the countries' chances of joining NATO, saying that it may happen if NATO leaders engage the Finnish

²³ Dalsjö, "The Hidden Rationality," 176–7.

²⁴ See Aunesluoma, *Britain, Sweden and the Cold War*, 154; Olesen, "Scandinavian Security Alignments," 187; Jakobson, *Finnish Neutrality*, 91.

²⁵ Dalsjö, "The Hidden Rationality."

²⁶ Aunesluoma, *Britain, Sweden and the Cold War*, 54.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ann-Sophie Dahl, "Sweden: Once a Moral Superpower, Always a Moral Superpower?," *International Journal* 61, no. 4 (Autumn 2006): 895–908.

²⁹ Jannicke Fiskvik, "Nordic Security: Moving towards NATO?," *CSS Analyses in Security Policy*, no. 189 (April 2016): 4.

and Swedish governments and peoples in a debate on the issue.³⁰ Regardless of the different reasons scholars give for why Finland and Sweden might join the Alliance, there is a general consensus that such an enlargement of NATO is not a foregone conclusion and may never happen.

C. POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES

The most persuasive answer to the primary research question of why Denmark and Norway chose to be founding members of NATO while Finland and Sweden did not is that Denmark and Norway were invaded and occupied by Nazi Germany and lost their sovereignty during the Second World War, but Finland and Sweden did not suffer equivalent losses. This negative history in Denmark and Norway might have played a crucial role in the national political debates that tipped them over the edge and on to the side of NATO. Sweden, on the other hand, avoided an attack of any kind during the war, and was potentially more comfortable in maintaining its policy of nonalignment in peace after the war as a consequence. Finland successfully defended its independence during the war, which may have given the Finns a certain confidence in their policy of nonalignment.

A second hypothesis is that the geographic positions of Denmark and Norway led them more easily to joining the Western-oriented Alliance than did the locations of Finland and Sweden. The fact that Denmark and Norway are physically closer to the majority of the other NATO countries perhaps made it more practical for them to join than Finland and Sweden. Furthermore, Denmark did not share a border with any Soviet-bloc countries when NATO was founded in 1949, and Norway had only a small border with the Soviet Union in the far north, while Sweden's eastern border was exposed to the Baltic Sea and nearly all of Finland's eastern perimeter was adjacent to the Soviet Union by both land and sea. Although this judgment may be counterintuitive, perhaps the relative safety afforded by Denmark's and Norway's geographic positions made them feel secure enough from Soviet reprisals to join NATO, while the exposed positions of

³⁰ Andrew T. Wolff, "The Future of NATO Enlargement after the Ukraine Crisis," *International Affairs* 91, no. 5 (2015): 1117.

Finland and Sweden discouraged them from joining a new Western Alliance that they were not sure would protect them.

D. RESEARCH DESIGN

The research for this thesis is qualitative and involves a comparison of the four chosen case studies of Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden. This methodology is most appropriate to answer the broader research question that asks why countries make their alliance decisions because it supports an analysis of four culturally similar neighboring countries that made dramatically different alliance decisions when faced with the emerging bipolar world in the aftermath of the Second World War. Although Iceland is also a Nordic country, the decision to exclude it from the research permits a symmetrical study of two Nordic countries that joined NATO—Denmark and Norway—and two that did not—Finland and Sweden.

The research for this thesis includes both primary and secondary sources in English. Because of this language constraint, the majority of the analytical sources consulted are secondary. Government statements, translated into English if necessary, provide the main primary sources. Additionally, the research aimed at analyzing the question of what might cause Finland and Sweden to join NATO draws from historical lessons learned regarding the initial policy decisions when NATO was founded, but it is otherwise primarily based on sources written since November 2013, the beginning of the ongoing Ukraine crisis, since this crisis has had a dramatic impact on thinking on the issue in the Nordic region.

E. THESIS OVERVIEW AND DRAFT CHAPTER OUTLINE

The organization of the thesis is straightforward. Chapter II analyzes why Denmark and Norway joined NATO as founding members, while Chapter III considers why Finland and Sweden did not. Chapter IV examines what might cause Finland and Sweden to join the Alliance in the future, and Chapter V examines whether the Alliance would accept Finnish or Swedish requests to join. The final chapter summarizes the main findings, offers an overall comparative analysis, and presents recommendations for U.S. national security policy concerning the countries and issues involved.

II. DENMARK AND NORWAY: CHOOSING NATO

After the Second World War ended, a new international political structure emerged, eventually pitting NATO, founded in 1949, against the Warsaw Pact, established by the Soviet Union in 1955. Nearly all of Europe was forced to choose sides as the Cold War began, and the Nordic neighbors Denmark and Norway were no exception. Both countries had been occupied by Germany for more than five years during the war and faced severe post-war challenges such as reconstructing their economies and societies. Additionally, both countries had territory that had been occupied by the Soviet Union as the war ended, and it was becoming clear in the aftermath that Moscow had no intention of vacating its influence from the region in the foreseeable future.³¹

Faced with these challenges, both Denmark and Norway elected to abandon their strong traditions of neutrality in favor of joining NATO as founding members. This chapter analyzes the reasons behind these alliance decisions. Ultimately, post-war politics in both Denmark and Norway did not allow these governments to remain non-aligned, since neutrality had failed them so clearly during the war and they did not have the capacities to defend themselves against any future Soviet aggression, which itself seemed increasingly likely after events such as the Prague coup in 1948. Additionally, negotiations for the SDU failed, which left Denmark and Norway with only one viable option for realistic territorial defense: to join NATO. The individual and unique situations in Denmark and Norway are examined prior to an analysis of the failed SDU negotiations that represented the best chance for the Danes and the Norwegians to pursue a path other than membership in NATO.

A. DENMARK

Prior to the Second World War, the Danes had for almost 200 years relied primarily on non-alignment in peace and neutrality in war in order to protect their sovereignty. This policy continued beyond the opening shots of the Second World War, as Denmark signed a non-aggression pact with Germany in 1939, only to be invaded by

³¹ Insall and Salmon, "Preface to the Nordic Countries," 137.

the Nazis in April 1940. Denmark surrendered after only a couple hours of fighting—a pitiful combat performance that Danes would not soon forget.³² Although the Germans initially gave the Danes the fiction that they were merely a protectorate and that their neutrality had not entirely failed, even this veil was removed in 1943 when Germans took greater control of the puppet government.³³ It was clear in the end that neutrality had utterly failed to protect Danish sovereignty and independence. After the Germans were defeated, Soviet forces took control of parts of Denmark in 1945, including the Baltic island of Bornholm. Since the Danes had little leverage with which to negotiate an end to this Soviet occupation, they were largely reduced to pleading and hoping that the Soviets would leave, which they eventually did in the spring of 1946.³⁴ This experience—being easily conquered, subjected to foreign occupation, and left powerlessly to the whims of foreign governments—had a lasting effect on the Danish psyche and, consequently, national politics. Not least of those affected by this experience were the Social Democrats, including future Prime Minister Hans Hedtoft, who would lead the Danes to NATO membership in 1949.³⁵ Indeed, Hedtoft’s argument to join NATO drew heavily on rhetoric involving Denmark being invaded during the war, though, as will be demonstrated, many other factors played a role as well.³⁶

After the war ended, the Danes found themselves in a rather precarious position. Their economy was in ruins, with few opportunities to earn money outside of trade with the United Kingdom.³⁷ More importantly, though, according to the well-known Danish historian Thorsten Olesen, “the military condition was indeed miserable” in post-war Denmark.³⁸ The country had placed a low priority on defense prior to the war, the Germans took what equipment they had during the occupation, and there was a small

³² Olesen, “The Dilemmas of Interdependence,” 52.

³³ *Ibid.*, 42.

³⁴ Insall and Salmon, “Preface to the Nordic Countries,” 141.

³⁵ Olesen, “The Dilemmas of Interdependence,” 52.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 52.

³⁷ Insall and Salmon, “Preface to the Nordic Countries,” 143.

³⁸ Olesen, “The Dilemmas of Interdependence,” 52.

supply of equipment on the market after the war.³⁹ These factors combined to leave the Danes without any near-term prospects of being able to defend themselves. Meanwhile, it was becoming increasingly clear that the post-war environment would be quite threatening to the small country. As Olesen notes, “in contrast to Norway, Denmark could not even count geography in as a partial ally,” since “the escalation of the Cold War and the increased Soviet dominance of the Baltic area” made it “evident that Denmark, whether she liked it or not, was becoming a Northern European front line country positioned on the line of demarcation between East and West.”⁴⁰ This was the situation that the post-war Danish government found itself in: it had almost no military capability with which to defend itself and ample need for protection.

In response to this difficult situation Denmark began looking to outside entities for additional security. Although bilateral agreements with the United Kingdom and other countries were concluded after the war, multilateralism began to take hold in Denmark as it did elsewhere. Associating themselves with multinational organizations was not something the Danes took lightly, however, as they had a healthy fear of losing their sovereignty by joining an organization that would be dominated by much more powerful countries.⁴¹ Indeed, they recognized that the more security they received from multilateral organizations the more independence and freedom of action they had to give up.⁴² Still, the Danes embraced the United Nations (UN) as founders in 1945, but it soon became apparent that the Cold War conflict would play out in this arena as well and that the UN did not offer protection from the Soviet Union.⁴³ In 1948 Denmark joined the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC), but this endeavor also failed to provide the security that the Danes needed.

Ultimately, Denmark was faced with negotiations for two multilateral organizations that might be able to provide the security that it needed: the SDU and

³⁹ Olesen, “The Dilemmas of Interdependence,” 52.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid., 45.

⁴² Ibid., 47.

⁴³ Ibid., 43.

NATO. This reality subsequently left the Danes with three potential options for their protection in 1949: joining the SDU, joining NATO, or relying on neutrality and their own defensive capabilities. As will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter, the Danes preferred the first option, but it was not to be for reasons beyond their control. This left only a decision between NATO membership and self-reliant neutrality, and the major parties in Denmark all agreed that the former was better than the latter.⁴⁴ That is not to say, however, that this was an easy decision for them to make. Aside from the natural concerns that a traditionally neutral society would have with joining a multilateral collective defense organization, such as losing their autonomy or being dragged into unwanted wars, many Danes had serious doubts as to whether NATO would even be able to ensure their security.⁴⁵ Consequently, the Hedtoft government in Denmark embraced NATO reluctantly and only as a lesser evil when negotiations for a Nordic alliance failed.⁴⁶

Further evidence of the reluctance of the Danes to join NATO can be seen in their actions after they joined the Alliance. Often going against the grain within the Alliance, the Danes banned Allies from permanently stationing troops in the country, and prevented the stationing of nuclear weapons on their territory (except Greenland). Moreover, they have never spent the agreed-upon 2 percent of their GDP on their military. Consequently, Denmark has often been called a reluctant Ally that serves “as an Ally with reservations,” especially prior to recent changes in Danish attitudes towards the Alliance.⁴⁷

B. NORWAY

Although Denmark had an unpleasant experience during the Second World War, Norway had it far worse. The Norwegian military was defeated after only two months of

⁴⁴ Olesen, “The Dilemmas of Interdependence,” 48.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 52.

⁴⁶ Poul Villaume, “Post-Cold War Historiography in Denmark,” in *The Cold War and the Nordic Countries: Historiography at a Crossroads*, ed. Thorsten B. Olesen (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2004), 19–20; Olesen, “The Dilemmas of Interdependence,” 46.

⁴⁷ Olesen, “The Dilemmas of Interdependence,” 37.

fighting, which, as with the Danes, left a lasting scar on the Norwegian psyche. Furthermore, since the Norwegians had also tried to remain neutral in the conflict, the failure of this policy to protect Norwegian sovereignty would not soon be forgotten. While Danish institutions were mostly allowed to remain intact during the German occupation, Norway resisted Berlin far more and was punished by more direct and complete German control. Norwegians were allowed to trade only with Germany, and as a result their GDP had shrunk by 45 percent by the end of the war—the most of any German-occupied country.⁴⁸ In the end, the proud Nordic country had been humiliated and devastated, with many towns destroyed and many thousands killed—not an experience that any Norwegian would like to see repeated in the future if they could help it.

Before the war with Germany was even over the Norwegian government in exile in the United Kingdom began expressing concerns over potential problems with the Soviet Union in the post-war aftermath. In early 1944 the Norwegians told the British that they were concerned that the Soviet army would be the first to liberate Norway, and they asked allied planners in the United Kingdom to consider liberating both southern and northern Norway first so the Soviets could not “break in and occupy the country indefinitely.”⁴⁹ Soon after the Soviets occupied northern Norway in late 1944 Norwegian concerns proved to be justified. During a meeting in November 1944 between the foreign ministers of Norway and the Soviet Union, Trygve Lie and Vyacheslav Molotov respectively, Molotov demanded that Norway cede Bear Island to the Soviets and establish a Norwegian-Soviet condominium over the Norwegian archipelago of Svalbard.⁵⁰ Not surprisingly, these demands were completely unacceptable to the Norwegians, a fact that they were forced to make clear repeatedly to the Soviets, under a great deal of pressure, until the Soviets eventually dropped the issue in late 1947.⁵¹ Additionally, although the Soviet army withdrew from northern Norway in 1945,

⁴⁸ Hein A.M. Klemann and Sergei Kudryashov, *Occupied Economies: An Economic History of Nazi-Occupied Europe, 1939–1945* (New York: Berg, 2012), 403.

⁴⁹ Insall and Salmon, “Preface to the Nordic Countries,” 138–9.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 139.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

pressure such as that applied over the issue of Svalbard made it clear to the Norwegians that the Soviets cared little for assuring the Norwegians of their sovereignty and safety—facts that certainly made them even more wary about their precarious security situation.

Several other events in Europe in 1948 increased tensions and pushed Norway further from its traditional neutrality and primed it for NATO membership. First, the Soviets were forcing Finland into negotiations for what became the Finnish-Soviet Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance. Soon after this the Norwegians received word of the Soviet-supported communist coup in Czechoslovakia, in response to which the Norwegian premier, Einar Gerhardsen, declared an ideological war on communism in Norway on 29 February.⁵² Lastly, on 8 March Halvard Lange, the Norwegian foreign minister, revealed to his American and British counterparts that the Norwegian government had heard rumors from three sources that the Soviets would soon approach Oslo with demands for a mutual assistance pact and asked what support Norway might receive from the West if the Soviets insisted on such an arrangement.⁵³

These three events served two key purposes regarding Norway joining NATO. First, they caused Norwegian public opinion to turn sharply against communism and the Soviet Union, thus priming the country to seek protection from the West against Soviet aggression.⁵⁴ Second, these events gave a group of European countries, led by the United Kingdom, both the will and the ability to begin serious negotiations with Ottawa and Washington for the creation of a security pact that would link Canada and the United States to the concerned Western European powers.⁵⁵ Thus, these events helped both propel movement toward the eventual creation of NATO and to prepare Norway to be a member of the Alliance.

Soviet aggression in Europe was thus the single most important factor that drove Norway into an alliance with the West. After the events of early 1948, Norwegians had,

⁵² Insall and Salmon, "Preface to the Nordic Countries," 149.

⁵³ Insall and Salmon, "Preface to the Nordic Countries," 145, 149; Folly, "Protecting the Northern Flank," 50.

⁵⁴ Aunesluoma, *Britain, Sweden and the Cold War*, 51.

⁵⁵ Folly, "Protecting the Northern Flank," 50.

in the words of the famous Finnish historian Max Jakobson, “lost their faith in neutrality. They believed the Soviet Union presented an immediate military menace and they were convinced that only the combined defensive power of the Western world, including the United States, could deter a Soviet aggression.”⁵⁶ Norway was determined to link itself to the Atlantic community, and this conviction, as will be shown later, contributed to the demise of the SDU negotiations and left Norway with only one clear choice: to join NATO as a founding member.⁵⁷

An additional factor that contributed to Norway’s decision to seek NATO membership was the powerful influence of Halvard Lange and the rest of the ruling Norwegian Labor party. After all, it was this government that ultimately calculated that it was imperative for Norway to align with the West rather than settle for a neutral SDU, self-reliant neutrality, or even appeasement of the Soviet Union. Social historian Finn Olstad has even argued that “the key to understanding Norway’s accession to NATO is to be found in the role and influence of Halvard Lange,” since he led the charge in negotiating terms for the Alliance on behalf of Norway and ultimately fought for the country to join the organization.⁵⁸ Although the Labor government as a whole would have preferred membership in an SDU that was itself tied to the West, since that was not possible the leaders of the party decided that NATO was the best option.⁵⁹ Without this decision to change Norway’s path, the country would have defaulted to neutrality, whether alone or within a neutral SDU, and not joined the Alliance.

C. THE SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE UNION

Although the unique histories of Denmark and Norway prior to 1948–1949 had in many ways prepared the countries to abandon non-alignment and seek protection from outside their borders, when discussions for an Atlantic alliance began in Washington in

⁵⁶ Jakobson, *Finnish Neutrality*, 99.

⁵⁷ Aunesluoma, *Britain, Sweden and the Cold War*, 154.

⁵⁸ Helge Pharo, “Post-Cold War Historiography in Norway,” in *The Cold War and the Nordic Countries: Historiography at a Crossroads*, ed. Thorsten B. Olesen (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2004), 101–2.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 107.

March 1948 it was still not clear that the countries would ultimately be parties to the treaty. This was especially true when in May 1948 Sweden reacted to the news of a possible Atlantic security organization by proposing a non-aligned Scandinavian alliance consisting of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. This idea became popular enough in the region that on 9 September 1948 the foreign ministers of the three countries held a meeting and called for a study to look into the issue.⁶⁰ As a consequence, the foreign ministers of Denmark and Norway, Gustav Rasmussen and Halvard Lange respectively, asked for a postponement of the talks regarding an Atlantic security organization.⁶¹ This delay proved easy for the Western powers to provide, since North Atlantic Treaty negotiations were already moving quite slowly in 1948 due in no small part to the general elections in progress in the United States.⁶² This, in turn, gave the Scandinavian countries room to consider their options.

The Nordic neighbors mostly used this time to argue over the nature of the proposed SDU. The Danes were by far the most enthusiastic for a Scandinavian alliance, due mostly to their belief that immediate help in a war would come more readily from the powerful Swedish military than from other Western powers. According to contemporary discussions between Britain and the United States, the Danes were probably right in this regard. Additionally, the Danes believed they would be an early target if the Soviets invaded Europe, which made the need for immediate help all the more important. The Norwegians, on the other hand, were much less enthusiastic than the Danes about SDU negotiations because they were ultimately unwilling to rely solely on Danish and Swedish help if it came to war. The Norwegians had bitter recent memories of the Swedes aiding the Germans even while the Nazis occupied Oslo, which made trusting them completely a difficult proposition. However, since many Norwegians distrusted the United States and identified strongly as Scandinavians, the government had to at least appear to make an effort to make the SDU work, despite the effort seeming doomed from the start. Whether there was ever a possibility of Oslo compromising and accepting an SDU that was not

⁶⁰ Insall and Salmon, "Preface to the Nordic Countries," 150.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Folly, "Protecting the Northern Flank," 57.

tied to the West has been the subject of much historical debate, but it seems clear that at least key figures such as Foreign Minister Lange, who aided Britain and the United States in sabotaging the negotiations, did not consider a neutral SDU a realistic option.⁶³

While Norway was determined that the SDU must be allied with the United States, Sweden was just as determined that it must be non-aligned, and Denmark primarily just wanted the union to exist.⁶⁴ The countries' inability to resolve this Norwegian-Swedish disagreement proved to be the primary cause for the collapse of the SDU negotiations.⁶⁵ After Norway realized that Sweden would not budge on this issue, Oslo decided that it could not budge either. Norway abandoned the negotiations, and Denmark followed suit shortly thereafter.

An additional factor that aided the collapse of the SDU negotiations was outside influence. Although the United Kingdom, the USSR, and the United States did not agree on much during this time, it seems they did agree that the SDU was a bad idea, although for different reasons. The Soviets thought that it was a thinly veiled Western alliance created solely to balance against them, which was of course an accurate reading of the situation.⁶⁶ The British were internally divided regarding whether Denmark and Norway joining the SDU would be a good thing or not, since the British knew that they could not realistically provide the Scandinavians security if the Soviets were to attack in the short term, but British action ultimately showed that they favored Denmark and Norway in NATO instead of the SDU.⁶⁷ The United States clearly preferred to share an alliance directly with the Nordic countries so that the NATO Allies could access their territory in peacetime, especially Greenland, and negotiations for the SDU threatened this.⁶⁸

⁶³ Folly, "Protecting the Northern Flank," 46–58.

⁶⁴ Olesen, "The Dilemmas of Interdependence," 49; Thorsten B. Olesen, "Scandinavian Security Alignments 1948–1949 in the DBPO Mirror," *Scandinavian Journal of History* 37, no. 2 (2012), 191.

⁶⁵ Magnus Petersson and Håkon Lunde Saxi, "Shifted Roles: Explaining Danish and Norwegian Alliance Strategy 1949–2009," *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 36, no. 6 (2013): 761; doi: 10.1080/01402390.2011.608934; Olesen, "The Dilemmas of Interdependence," 49.

⁶⁶ Olesen, "The Dilemmas of Interdependence," 49.

⁶⁷ Folly, "Protecting the Northern Flank," 51–58.

⁶⁸ Olesen, "Scandinavian Security Alignments," 188.

In their efforts to stop the formation of the SDU, London, Moscow, and Washington took separate paths. Britain thought it best to allow the talks to “blow themselves out,” believing that the different opinions of the Scandinavian countries would naturally cause the talks to fail with little outside influence.⁶⁹ This caused the British to take a soft approach and simply play up the merits of the alternative to the SDU, an Atlantic security arrangement, and let Denmark and Norway realize for themselves that that was a better choice. The Soviets simply made it known that they opposed the creation of the SDU, which acted to weaken one of the SDU’s main supposed advantages over NATO: that it would draw less negative Soviet attention to the Scandinavian countries. The United States, however, did the most to counter the SDU negotiations. The most important position the United States took in this regard was to tell the Nordic countries that a neutral SDU would not receive assistance from the West in the form of military equipment or funding. While this was a blow to the SDU on Sweden’s end, it was crucial to Norway’s objection to the SDU remaining neutral, and in this way it greatly assisted the collapse of the SDU negotiations.⁷⁰

D. CONCLUSION

As the SDU negotiations were officially breaking down in late January 1949, the Soviet Union sent the Norwegian government a note pressuring it not to join NATO.⁷¹ Instead of fulfilling its intended purpose, the note backfired and enabled Norwegian Foreign Minister Lange to abandon hopes for the SDU and resume negotiations for the Atlantic pact.⁷² Denmark followed suit shortly afterwards, and both countries signed onto the Alliance later that year as founding members.

As some historians have noted, however, Denmark and Norway did not completely abandon their traditions of neutrality after joining the Alliance. According to Magnus Petersson and Håkon Lunde Saxi, for example, “a certain residual neutralism can

⁶⁹ Folly, “Protecting the Northern Flank,” 57.

⁷⁰ Folly, “Protecting the Northern Flank,” 62; Olesen, “Scandinavian Security Alignments,” 187; Aunesluoma, *Britain, Sweden and the Cold War*, 154.

⁷¹ Folly, “Protecting the Northern Flank,” 62.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 62.

perhaps be detected in some of their post-membership policies.”⁷³ The Danes and Norwegians sought to deter a Soviet attack by presenting a strong and unified NATO, while also reassuring Moscow that no attack against the USSR would be carried out through their territory.⁷⁴ In accomplishing these goals, the countries integrated into NATO’s defense structure as much as they could while still restricting NATO activity on their territories. Before the treaty was even signed the Norwegian government declared that no allied bases would be allowed on its territory as long as Norway was not threatened by an attack, and Denmark established a similar policy in 1953 with an exception given for bases on distant Greenland.⁷⁵ Such actions made clear that even though the countries had abandoned their long histories of non-alignment and neutrality, they did not do so whole-heartedly.

Ultimately, however, from this study’s perspective the most important finding is that the failures of neutrality for both Denmark and Norway in the Second World War caused traumatic experiences that made them willing to seek alternative arrangements in the future. Then, when faced with a post-war situation that included poor internal defense capabilities and rising threats to their continued sovereignty from the USSR, key Danish and Norwegian leaders chose to seek protection from stronger states. Although both states had to give the proposal for an SDU the first opportunity to provide this security, the inability of Norway and Sweden to compromise over the SDU’s Western alignment caused the negotiations to collapse. Left with no viable alternatives, and faced with a precarious security situation, both countries concluded that they had little choice but to join NATO.

⁷³ Petersson and Saxi, “Shifted Roles,” 762.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 764.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 765.

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III. FINLAND AND SWEDEN: CHOOSING NEUTRALITY

While the post-Second World War environment led Denmark and Norway to abandon neutrality in favor of NATO membership, Finland and Sweden fought hard to remain neutral and were able to remain non-aligned throughout the Cold War. This chapter analyzes why Helsinki and Stockholm chose non-alignment and how they were able to follow through on these policy decisions despite strong pressures to choose a side. The primary research question to be addressed is, “why did Finland and Sweden choose not to join NATO as founding members?”

For Finland this question manifests itself as follows: “how and why did Finland remain neutral in the aftermath of the Second World War, rather than seek protection from the West?” Ultimately it will be argued that Finland was only narrowly able to avoid being engulfed by the Iron Curtain due to the recognition of its top leadership that the Finns had to appease Joseph Stalin and appear non-threatening to Soviet interests in order to maintain their sovereignty. That the Finns did not seek membership in NATO and were able to fend off direct Soviet control was aided by their impressive performances in previous wars against the USSR and the strong leadership of Finnish Presidents Juho Paasikivi and Urho Kekkonen. Moreover, the lack of support from the West meant that NATO membership was not a genuine option.

Furthermore, this chapter argues that Sweden remained neutral due to a combination of factors: the inertia created by the strong historical ties to the policy, the inability to create the SDU, the failures of Western powers to influence Swedish foreign policy, the unwavering influence of Swedish Foreign Minister Östen Undén, the desire to stay out of any initial nuclear exchange between the East and the West, and the Swedish fear that aligning with the West would endanger Finland and upset the Nordic balance. The chapter discusses Finland-specific issues before moving to Sweden and a short conclusion.

A. FINLAND

Although Finland has a long history with Russia, little of it had been as an independent country when the Soviet Union demanded in the autumn of 1939 that Finland cede territory on the Karelian Isthmus and islands near the port of Hanko to Moscow. Indeed, before the Republic of Finland was formed in 1919 Russia controlled all of this land. After the Nazi-Soviet Pact was signed in August 1939 the Soviets finally had the ability and breathing room required to start taking what they wanted in Finland.⁷⁶ Despite the urgings of many foreign governments, the Finnish government refused to cede the demanded territories to Moscow, which led to the Soviets attacking Finland in November 1939. Thus, began the Winter War, which the Finns, lacking any security treaties with other states, were forced to fight alone.⁷⁷ France and Britain did, however, notify Stalin that they were considering sending an expeditionary force to Finland's aid, a possibility which threatened to escalate and prolong the war greatly.⁷⁸ It is likely that this threat prevented the Soviets from taking all of Finland, which (it is widely believed) they were more than capable of doing within a few months.⁷⁹

Instead, the war ended on March 12, 1940, when the Finns signed a peace treaty that saved their sovereignty but cost them roughly 10 percent of their territory and required a 30 year lease on the port of Hanko.⁸⁰ Barely half a year later, Germany had defeated France, and Britain was in no position to help the Finns; only Hitler's influence prevented Stalin from following through on his clear desires to take all of Finland, and the Finns knew it.⁸¹ It is no surprise, then, that Helsinki signed a transit agreement with Berlin that allowed German troops to travel across Finland on the way from the Baltics to

⁷⁶ George Maude, *The Finnish Dilemma: Neutrality in the Shadow of Power* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), 8–9.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Fred Charles Iklé, *Every War Must End* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 52–53.

⁸⁰ Maude, *The Finnish Dilemma*, 8–9; Rinna Kullaa, *Non-alignment and Its Origins in Cold War Europe* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), 53–54.

⁸¹ Iklé, *Every War*, 52–53.

Norway; gradually the two countries became increasingly entangled.⁸² When the Germans invaded the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941, Finland sensed an opportunity to take back lost territory and established strong ties with the Germans, who the Finns expected to win and eventually rule Russia.⁸³ Finland declared war on the USSR on 26 June 1941, and what the Finns call the Continuation War began.⁸⁴

As it turned out, however, the Finns had chosen the wrong side. Once this became clear to Finland in February 1943, their leaders decided to begin trying to exit the war on as favorable terms with the Soviets as possible.⁸⁵ In September 1944 an armistice was signed that ended the Continuation War and allowed Finland to maintain its independence—a feat not accomplished by any other country in the path of the Red Army, but one that was accomplished by the Finns in the previous Winter War as well. As Finnish expert Max Jakobson points out, this achievement was only possible because “Finnish resistance to the Soviet offensives was strong enough to raise the cost of breaking it to a point at which continuing the war against Finland put more important Soviet interests at risk.”⁸⁶ In the Winter War this risk was that of the involvement of France and Britain, while in 1944 the Soviet units fighting in Finland were needed for “the race to Berlin.”⁸⁷ In both cases the Finns fought with great skill and tenacity, inflicting far more casualties than they sustained and earning Soviet respect. In the Winter War, for example, Finns killed over twice as many soldiers as they lost, wounded over four times as many, and destroyed over eight times as many aircraft.⁸⁸ Furthermore, and most importantly, in both cases Moscow chose to make peace before destroying the Finnish army, thus allowing Finland to survive as an independent country.⁸⁹

⁸² Maude, *The Finnish Dilemma*, 10; Ikle, *Every War*, 25–26.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Maude, *The Finnish Dilemma*, 9.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 10.

⁸⁶ Max Jakobson, *Finland in the New Europe* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998), 5.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ H. M. Tillotson, *Finland at Peace and War: 1918–1993* (Norwich: Michael Russel, 1993), Appendix 6.

⁸⁹ Jakobson, *Finland in the New Europe*, 5.

While the Armistice of September 1944 protected Finnish sovereignty, it was also quite costly. The Finns had to turn on the German forces and drive them from Finland, to accept numerical limitations placed on their military, to open their ports and airports to Soviet operations, and to lease the naval base of Porkkala, situated just 30km from Helsinki, to the Soviets.⁹⁰ Thus, the threat of the Soviets occupying Finland was by no means gone in the immediate aftermath of the war. According to Tuomo Polvinen, Finnish President C. G. E. Mannerheim and Prime Minister Ernst von Born “believed that the bolshevization of Finland could hardly be avoided” after the signing of the armistice.⁹¹ The same conclusion was reached by observers on the outside looking in, such as the secretary-general of the Swedish Foreign Ministry, Erik Boheman, who commented that the lease of Porkkala meant “the end of Finland’s independence: the country would become a protectorate of the Soviet Union.”⁹²

It was under this pressure, and as one of the defeated powers, that Finland entered the negotiations for the Treaty of Paris. Consequently, the Finns could do little but try not to antagonize the Soviets and hope that their former Western partners would help them. The first instruction that President Paasikivi gave his delegation at the Peace Conference was “always to bear in mind that the maintenance of good relations with the Soviet Union had overriding importance and that nothing was to be done in Paris that might give rise to the suspicion that Finland was plotting with the Western Powers against the Soviet Union.”⁹³ This instruction was important because among the great powers only the Soviet Union and Britain had declared war on Finland and thus had a basis for deciding the peace terms with Helsinki. As Jakobson notes, however, Britain never actually fought Finland, so “British interest in making peace with Finland was as formal as had been the

⁹⁰ Bergquist et al., “The Effects,” 8.

⁹¹ Polvinen, *Between East and West*, 35.

⁹² Ibid., 36.

⁹³ Jakobson, *Finnish Neutrality*, 25.

war between them.”⁹⁴ Consequently, only the Soviet Union “had a direct national interest in the Finnish treaty and the power to do something about it.”⁹⁵

In the end, peace terms were decided by the Soviets and forced on Finland without its opinion being taken into account, which deepened the disillusionment that the Finns had with Western policy. The Treaty of Paris confirmed the harshest terms of the previous armistice, including: heavy war reparations; the lease of Porkkala; the Soviet use of Finnish railways, waterways, and roads to reach the port; limitations on the capabilities of the Finnish military; and the cession of almost 10 percent of Finnish territory to the Soviets. Additionally, article three of the treaty prevented Finland from joining any anti-Soviet alliance, thus making the legality of Finland’s entry into an Atlantic alliance in the future hazy at best. However, this history of Western inaction regarding the defense of Finland was hardly one that would entice the Finns to trust the West to protect them from the Soviets in the future under NATO auspices anyway.⁹⁶ The lesson that Finnish leaders learned from all of this was that neutrality was their best hope for national survival, and the primary reason that this policy failed in the Winter War was that the Soviets had not believed Finland would remain neutral in the coming world war.⁹⁷ Consequently, Finnish leaders concluded that their primary task in the aftermath of the Second World War was to create a new relationship with their eastern neighbors founded on Soviet trust that the Finns would not fight against them.

The Finnish leaders who developed this strategy and had the power to carry it out were Paasikivi and Kekkonen. The former was prime minister in 1944 before being elected president in both 1946 and 1950, while the latter was speaker of the Parliament and a close advisor to Paasikivi in the late 1940s, prime minister in 1950–1953 and 1954–1956, and finally president himself from 1956 to 1982.

Taking Finland’s future into his hands, Paasikivi had two main tasks in the aftermath of the Second World War: to convince Stalin that he could trust Finland with

⁹⁴ Jakobson, *Finnish Neutrality*, 25.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 31–32.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

independence, and to persuade the Finnish people to come together to achieve this task.⁹⁸ In accomplishing these goals Paasikivi became perhaps the greatest contributor both to Finland's decision to remain neutral after the war and its ability to do so without being absorbed into the Soviet bloc.

Evidence of Paasikivi's and Kekkonen's influence and success can be seen in the Finnish government's response to the post-war armistice and treaty. Fulfillment of the obligations placed on Finland by these agreements became the primary goal of the new government, because by doing so Paasikivi hoped to show Moscow that Russia could trust Finland to keep its word.⁹⁹ The government paid its war reparations on time, despite amounting to 15 percent of Finland's GDP for the first year and 11 percent in the second.¹⁰⁰ As Jakobson points out, "Finland is probably the only country in modern history that has voluntarily paid its war reparations in full."¹⁰¹ Furthermore, Paasikivi's belief that Finland needed to appear non-threatening to the Soviets led him to restrict the Finnish press, suppress Fascist movements, install members of the communist SKDL party in his government, and prosecute former Finnish leaders on charges of war guilt.¹⁰² This last issue was taken up not only to show the Soviets that the new Finnish government regretted the previous leaders' decision to invade the Soviet Union with Germany, but also to prevent these men from being tried by the Soviets themselves. In the end, only eight Finns were tried, and they received sentences up to a maximum of 10 years but served no more than half of their terms.¹⁰³ Lastly, Paasikivi decided that Finland would not accept Marshall Aid and took every effort to avoid showing favor to the West, all in an effort to allay any Soviet fears regarding the USSR's northwestern border.

⁹⁸ Jakobson, *Finland in the New Europe*, 53–54.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 54.

¹⁰² Maude, *The Finnish Dilemma*, 31.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 32.

This strategy of keeping a distance from the West and trying to satisfy the Soviets without further compromising Finnish sovereignty continued after Moscow orchestrated a coup in Czechoslovakia in 1948 and, soon thereafter, sent Paasikivi an invitation to negotiate a treaty of friendship and cooperation. Although nearly 80 percent of the Finnish Parliament and the majority of the public were against agreeing to negotiations out of fear that they would lead to a military alliance, Paasikivi and Kekkonen (then the speaker of the Parliament) considered it a political test to see if Finland could be trusted not to join a Western alliance.¹⁰⁴ According to Finnish expert Rinna Kullaa, this was “a test both leaders were determined that Finland should not fail.”¹⁰⁵

Consequently, Paasikivi sent a delegation to Moscow to begin negotiations in March 1948, and he chose Kekkonen to lead the group in the Soviet Union while he directed actions from Helsinki. As evidence of the fears that Finns still had regarding the possibility of losing their sovereignty to the Soviets, Paasikivi reportedly remained in Finland in order to help prevent any communist coup from taking place during the negotiations.¹⁰⁶

It was this fear for the survival of Finland, and the knowledge that Finns had only political means at their disposal and no help from the West, that drove Paasikivi and Kekkonen to propose terms for a treaty that would last for 10 years, said that Finland would repel any attempted attack against the Soviet Union that went through Finland, and reconfirmed article three of the Paris peace treaty, which prevented Finland from joining any alliance directed against the Soviet Union.¹⁰⁷ Additionally, this proposal included a preamble that stated that the treaty had been drafted “taking into account Finland’s desire to stay outside the conflicts of interest between the great powers.”¹⁰⁸ To the pleasant surprise of the Finnish delegation, Moscow was pleased with this proposal and negotiations concluded rather quickly.

¹⁰⁴ Kullaa, *Non-alignment and Its Origins*, 62, 57.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 56–57.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 69–70.

¹⁰⁸ Jakobson, *Finnish Neutrality*, 43.

Once again proving his importance to Finland's continued neutrality, Paasikivi was able to convince the reluctant Finnish Parliament to accept the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance, despite the fact that the majority of Finns would have preferred not to endorse it.¹⁰⁹ This final act solidified Finland's inability to join NATO as a founding member in 1949 and established what became known as the Paasikivi-Kekkonen line—a foreign policy aimed at assuring the Soviets that their border with Finland was secure while resisting any attempts by Moscow to impede Finnish sovereignty.

Although Paasikivi and Kekkonen played a pivotal role in developing and carrying out this policy, scholar Klaus Törnudd has pointed out that it is not clear that Finland could have chosen anything but neutrality. Finland was prevented from joining NATO, both legally by the treaties it signed and physically due to the Soviet military presence that Finland was forced to host, and Finland had no desire to join a military alliance with the Soviets, so the only option available was neutrality.¹¹⁰ Consequently, although Paasikivi was not a neutralist himself, he saw no prudent choice but to take the path he did.¹¹¹ Thus, Törnudd argues, “the policy of neutrality was an inevitable consequence of the struggle for power between NATO and the Warsaw Pact.”¹¹²

A final reason that the Finns chose the path of neutrality after the Second World War can be found in the failures of Western policy to influence them to do otherwise. It has already been noted that Western powers did little to help Finland in the Winter War or to prevent harsh terms from being forced on Finland in the Paris peace treaties. Furthermore, it is clear that this Western inaction contributed to the Finnish judgment that Helsinki could not count on the West. Convinced that they could not win against the East alone, the Finns believed that they had no choice but to appease the Soviets. The question remains, however, as to why the West allowed history to unfold in this way.

¹⁰⁹ Maude, *The Finnish Dilemma*, 12.

¹¹⁰ Törnudd, “Finnish Neutrality Policy,” 43–44.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 44.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 46.

The short answer is that, after the Second World War, the West soon wrote Finland off as lost to Soviet influence, especially since Western leaders were not willing or able to defend Finland against Soviet attack if that became necessary. Internal British Foreign Office documents reveal that the British concluded that Finland was lost to the Russian orbit and that the British would have difficulties in changing that due to the strong position of the Soviets in the region.¹¹³ Swedish Foreign Minister Östen Undén agreed with this conclusion and noted that, although an alliance between Finland and the Soviet Union would be bad for Sweden, Finland was already within the Soviet sphere.¹¹⁴ Additionally, the British Foreign Secretary in the immediate post-war era, Ernest Bevin, prevented Finland from being invited to Atlantic alliance discussions because he knew the West could not follow through on any security guarantees given to the Finns.¹¹⁵ In sum, Paasikivi's government was not given the option of trying to bend the rules of its peace treaty and joining NATO, even if the Finns probably would have declined an invitation anyway.

B. SWEDEN

Sweden's experience with the policy of neutrality was just the opposite of Finland's. At the conclusion of the Second World War, Sweden had remained both neutral and out of war for over 150 years, and most Swedes considered the latter a direct outcome of the former.¹¹⁶ The policy had been viewed as a success for so long that many in Sweden believed that "a good Swede is a neutral Swede."¹¹⁷ Indeed, Christian Günther, the Swedish foreign minister during the war, claimed in his last official speech that "Sweden succeeded in what everybody had wished for, that is to avoid war," and that Swedes were even "able to help [their brother people] in so far as was possible."¹¹⁸ Minister Undén, who probably had the greatest impact of all on Sweden's decision not to

¹¹³ Insall and Salmon, "Preface to the Nordic Countries," 143–144.

¹¹⁴ Aunesluoma, *Britain, Sweden and the Cold War*, 55.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹¹⁶ Jakobson, *Finnish Neutrality*, 91.

¹¹⁷ Dahl, "Sweden: Once a Moral Superpower," 907.

¹¹⁸ Wahlback, "Nordic Solidarity," 45–46.

join NATO, argued that neutrality was so popular that public opinion would not allow any change from it.¹¹⁹

Swedish expert Ann-Sofie Dahl has argued that the popularity of neutrality in Sweden was and is still due in part to “the idea that only nonaligned actors can pursue an activist, and even morally superior, foreign policy.”¹²⁰ Thus, if Sweden wanted to continue to be a good example for the world to follow, then it had to remain neutral. This idea, combined with the security that many Swedes believed neutrality brought them, created a considerable amount of public resistance to any change in Swedish foreign policy that made it politically impractical for the government to join NATO, if it had wished to do so.

Many Swedes, however, found reason to doubt whether it was neutrality or other external causes that kept Sweden out of the Second World War, and it is clear that Sweden was not even able to maintain complete neutrality in the conflict. In June 1941 Germany demanded that Sweden allow the Wehrmacht to use Swedish railroads to transfer troops to Finland.¹²¹ Swedish Prime Minister Per Albin Hansson did not want to sacrifice Swedish neutrality by agreeing, but King Gustaf Adolf and most of the military were pro-German and lobbied for the request to be approved, which it eventually was.¹²² Further troop transfers via Swedish railroads were reluctantly agreed to by Hansson in August 1941, and in September the government agreed to provide Germany a line of credit to pay for the 45,000 tons of iron ore that the Swedes sold the Nazis every day in 1941.¹²³ The Soviets, knowing how critical this iron was to Germany, sunk Swedish ships to prevent its delivery, further tainting Swedish neutrality.¹²⁴ To top it off, Sweden evacuated German soldiers injured in Finland to hospitals in Norway, and German

¹¹⁹ Jakobson, *Finnish Neutrality*, 91.

¹²⁰ Dahl, “Sweden: Once a Moral Superpower,” 907.

¹²¹ N. Vukolov, “In Sweden at the Time of World War II,” *International Affairs: A Russian Journal of World Politics, Diplomacy, and International Relations* 56, no. 4 (2010), 247.

¹²² Vukolov, “In Sweden at the Time of World War II,” 247–8.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 248–250

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 250.

soldiers routinely vacationed in or travelled through Sweden when on leave.¹²⁵ While this cooperation with Germany certainly helped keep Sweden from being invaded, Swedish historian Krister Wahlback argues that even this probably would have failed to protect Swedish independence if the British had been defeated by Germany in 1940–1941 or if the Soviet Union and the United States had not joined the conflict when they did.¹²⁶ Thus, although the majority of Swedes wanted to remain neutral after the conflict ended, there were plenty of arguments to be made by Swedish politicians for abandoning neutrality and joining NATO, if they so desired.

Further evidence of this can be seen in the fact that Sweden actually did attempt to abandon neutrality by creating the SDU, which would have consisted of a military alliance between Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. Although the idea was that this union would be non-aligned itself and stay neutral in any war not involving an attack on one of the three countries, this was still a complete departure from Sweden's policy of independent neutrality that it had maintained previously.¹²⁷ Unfortunately for the other states that desired an Atlantic alliance, however, Sweden only arrived at the decision to try to create the SDU because the government saw that Norway was moving towards the Atlantic alliance, and Sweden saw an opportunity to counter this by appealing to Norwegian feelings of Scandinavianism.¹²⁸ Ultimately, negotiations broke down because the United States wanted Denmark and Norway in the Atlantic alliance and told all three countries that a neutral SDU would not be able to purchase arms from the United States.¹²⁹ Consequently, the Norwegians, with their previous German occupation fresh in their minds, decided they would only join the SDU if it was linked to NATO. Sweden, however, would not budge from its stance that the Union must be neutral.¹³⁰ Thus, negotiations crumbled, and Sweden was left to choose between isolated neutrality and following the Norwegians and the Danes into NATO.

¹²⁵ Vukolov, "In Sweden at the Time of World War II," 248.

¹²⁶ Wahlback, "Nordic Solidarity," 46.

¹²⁷ Insall and Salmon, "Preface to the Nordic Countries," 150.

¹²⁸ Folly, "Protecting the Northern Flank," 54.

¹²⁹ Nilsson, "Amber Nine," 289.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 289.

One of the reasons that Sweden ultimately chose isolated neutrality was that American and British leaders failed to influence them to do otherwise. This failure was caused in large part by American and British disagreement on how to best handle the reluctant Swedes, which resulted in the two countries choosing opposite strategies. The United States decided to employ a heavy hand with the Swedes and began “rebuffing feelers from Sweden on informal staff discussions, stalling export licenses for military technology to Sweden, removing Swedish ports from U.S. naval units’ visit schedules to Scandinavia, and reiterating the fact that, unless Sweden abandoned neutrality, no last minute help would be forthcoming from the U.S. in an emergency.”¹³¹ Furthermore, the United States told Sweden that it could not expect to buy American military supplies if it remained neutral, and in 1948 the U.S. ambassador to Sweden, Freeman Matthews, and the U.S. Counsellor at the embassy, Hugh Cumming, told a group of Swedish businessmen that in a war the United States would bomb Swedish industries “out of existence” in order to prevent their use by the Soviets.¹³² The result of this policy was that the Swedish military, afraid of being isolated and without American military equipment, came to believe that their government “was making a serious mistake” and consequently began “pulling all possible strings within and outside the Swedish government to make it change its mind” regarding neutrality.¹³³

The British, on the other hand, preferred what Robin Hankey, the head of the British Foreign Office’s Northern Department, called “crafty diplomacy.”¹³⁴ The British thought that the United States had pressed Sweden too hard and that this was counter-productive.¹³⁵ The British, in turn, took a more agreeable stance towards Sweden and began selling Vampire jet aircraft to Stockholm, which completely undermined the American strategy.¹³⁶ Ambassador Matthews lamented in response that the “reasonably

¹³¹ Aunesluoma, *Britain, Sweden and the Cold War*, 65.

¹³² Aunesluoma, *Britain, Sweden and the Cold War*, 64; Folly, “Protecting the Northern Flank,” 53.

¹³³ Insall and Salmon, “Preface to the Nordic Countries,” 147; Aunesluoma, *Britain, Sweden and the Cold War*, 76.

¹³⁴ Folly, “Protecting the Northern Flank,” 53.

¹³⁵ Insall and Salmon, “Preface to the Nordic Countries,” 150.

¹³⁶ Aunesluoma, *Britain, Sweden and the Cold War*, 66–67.

good chances of getting Sweden into [the] western camp are being sacrificed by [the] short run interest of [the] British aircraft industry and British ignorance of Swedish psychology,” and that if the British did not cancel the contract then “we may just as well forget any thought of winning Sweden from neutrality.”¹³⁷ At the urging of London, the United States eventually gave up trying to influence the Swedes by withholding supplies, and this left the Americans without a strategy at all. This deficit, combined with what the Foreign Office interpreted as a lack of urgency from Washington regarding the formation of the Atlantic alliance, hamstrung the attempts by the British to convince Sweden to seek protection from the United States.¹³⁸ The U.S. position, in the end, was that only Greenland and Iceland were necessary for the Alliance because of their strategic value, and Sweden could remain outside if it preferred. Ultimately, Bevin and U.S. Secretary of State George Marshall gave up on Sweden and decided not to invite the Swedes to the negotiations that led to the formation of NATO, thus signaling the final failure of U.S. and British policy to sway Sweden into the Alliance.¹³⁹

Although the Americans and British failed in this way, it is possible that they never could have succeeded in the first place as long as Sweden’s foreign minister was Östen Undén. Undén insisted throughout the period that there would be no change to Sweden’s foreign policy of neutrality, saying that “it would be disastrous... if Russia got the impression that Sweden might be used as a base for attacks upon Russia.”¹⁴⁰ Consequently, after a speech on 4 February 1948, in which Undén confirmed his trust in neutrality, Ambassador Matthews concluded that “any Swedish departure from neutrality must be over Undén’s dead body.”¹⁴¹ The British conclusion was the same: no fundamental changes in Swedish foreign policy would happen with Undén in charge.¹⁴² This realization directly led to U.S. and British decisions to proceed in creating the

¹³⁷ Aunesluoma, *Britain, Sweden and the Cold War*, 67.

¹³⁸ Folly, “Protecting the Northern Flank,” 53.

¹³⁹ Aunesluoma, *Britain, Sweden and the Cold War*, 75.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 54.

¹⁴¹ “Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948, Western Europe, Volume III,” Office of the Historian, March 16, 2017, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v03/d94>.

¹⁴² Aunesluoma, *Britain, Sweden and the Cold War*, 55.

Alliance without Sweden.¹⁴³ Thus, Undén's role in preventing Sweden from joining NATO as a founding member cannot be overstated.

According to new research performed by Robert Dalsjö, one reason behind Undén's determination to stay neutral was that by doing so Sweden could remain outside of any devastating initial nuclear exchange between the East and the West if the Cold War turned hot.¹⁴⁴ This research indicates that the Swedish leaders understood that they would be forced into the fray if war erupted, and in such a conflict they would join the Western forces, but that they preferred to join the war after the initial salvos were fired.¹⁴⁵ Evidence that this is true can be found in documents about previously secret arrangements that the Swedish and U.S. governments had made for the protection of both Sweden and the NATO Alliance in the event of war. Sweden had secretly agreed to allow the overflight of U.S. aircraft for bombing missions against the Soviet Union, had secretly made preparations to receive NATO forces and provide help to the NATO war effort, and had cooperated extensively in intelligence sharing with the West.¹⁴⁶ This cooperation ultimately proved fruitful, as Sweden was rewarded with the ability to purchase American arms starting in 1952, when it became part of the Mutual Defense Assistance Act.¹⁴⁷ The Soviet Union even knew about these secret Western ties, further decreasing the likelihood that Sweden could stay neutral in war.¹⁴⁸ However, as has been noted, Swedish leaders viewed the possibility of avoiding inclusion in the Soviet Union's initial nuclear attack plan as a convincing reason to remain outside the Atlantic alliance in peacetime. At the same time, Swedish preparations to work with NATO in the event of war might have acted to enhance the overall Western deterrence posture.

An additional argument made by Swedish leaders for not participating in NATO's creation centered on what became known as the "Finland Question." That is the argument

¹⁴³ Insall and Salmon, "Preface to the Nordic Countries," 147; "Foreign Relations of the United States."

¹⁴⁴ Dalsjö, "The Hidden Rationality," 175.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 175–176.

¹⁴⁷ Nilsson, "Amber Nine," 290.

¹⁴⁸ Dalsjö, "The Hidden Rationality," 176.

that if Sweden aligned with the West, the Soviets would find it necessary to exert greater control over Finland in response.¹⁴⁹ Finland becoming a Soviet satellite was not an acceptable outcome, so the Swedes argued both publicly and privately that they could not join the Alliance.¹⁵⁰ This upheld what became known as the Nordic balance, the array of international relations that emerged in the Nordic region, with Denmark, Iceland, and Norway in the Western camp, Finland in the Soviet orbit, and Sweden neutral in between, thus balancing the system. Jakobson, however, has argued against the proponents of this idea, suggesting that the notion that Sweden stayed neutral for the sake of Finland “would make as much, or rather, as little sense [as] to claim that Finland fought to retain her independence in order to make it easier for Sweden to stay neutral.”¹⁵¹ In any case, whether their purported concern for Finland’s status was sincere or not, the Swedes succeeded in using the argument to justify their neutrality to the Americans and British: the British Foreign Office eventually pointed to this argument themselves and even believed Soviet pressure on Finland was aimed primarily at keeping Sweden out of negotiations for an Atlantic alliance.¹⁵² Thus, the Finland question and the idea of a Nordic balance appear to have played an important role in Sweden’s decision not to join NATO regardless of how sincere the Swedish politicians were in invoking it.

C. CONCLUSION

Although there were powerful pro-alliance forces in both Finland and Sweden that might have propelled either or both of the countries into joining NATO as founding members, these forces ultimately lost to more powerful ones that kept both states neutral. The Finns salvaged their independence at the end of both the Winter War and the Second World War by hard fighting, but learned from these conflicts that they could not trust the West to defend them against their Eastern neighbor. This lesson proved true in the post-war negotiations, after which the Soviet Union imposed harsh terms on Finland that

¹⁴⁹ Olesen, “Scandinavian Security Alignments,” 190; Wahlback, “Nordic Solidarity,” 47–48; Dalsjö, “The Hidden Rationality,” 177.

¹⁵⁰ Bjereld and Ekengren, “Cold War Historiography in Sweden,” 148; Dalsjö, “The Hidden Rationality,” 177.

¹⁵¹ Jakobson, *Finnish Neutrality*, 91.

¹⁵² Insall and Salmon, “Preface to the Nordic Countries,” 145.

prevented it from legally joining NATO. Still unconfident in their ability to maintain their independence from Moscow, the Finns followed the powerful leadership of Paasikivi and Kekkonen and signed a treaty with the Soviet Union that guaranteed both Finnish sovereignty and neutrality in exchange for promising not to join a Western alliance.

Sweden, on the other hand, had a much easier path to joining NATO as a founding member, but turned it down due to a variety of reasons. Chief among these were the strong public support for maintaining neutrality caused by a long and successful national history with the policy and the failures of Swedish politicians to forge the SDU and of Western diplomats to sway the influential Undén away from a neutral stance. Additionally, the Swedish government wished to stay out of the Alliance in order to avoid any initial nuclear attack against NATO members and desired to maintain the Nordic balance in order to avoid endangering Finland by joining NATO.

IV. FINLAND AND SWEDEN IN A CHANGING SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

This chapter will address a range of issues that may affect the prospects for future NATO membership for Finland and Sweden, including the ongoing crisis in Ukraine, the likely departure of the United Kingdom from the European Union (EU), and the election of President Donald Trump. The primary research question to be addressed is, “what are the prospects of Finland or Sweden seeking membership in NATO, and what developments might lead them to seek membership?” Additional questions to be addressed revolve around issues that impact this central question. As suggested above, these factors include the crisis in Ukraine, Brexit, and the election of Donald Trump as president of the United States. Moreover, what resistance to change in Finland and Sweden would have to be overcome for these states to seek membership? What changes would be required in Finland or Sweden for them to be eligible to join the Alliance? What developments could reverse the trend of Helsinki and Stockholm becoming increasingly close to NATO?

This chapter discusses Finland and Sweden separately before undertaking a combined and comparative analysis.

A. FINLAND

Finland’s foreign policies, including its military alignment decisions, are heavily influenced by its geographic position. Although Finns think of themselves as culturally and ideologically aligned with the West, they have always felt the presence of their powerful neighbor to the east, Russia. Finns have not often been able to take their sovereignty for granted in recent history. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Finland abandoned its policy of neutrality, which had served the Finns throughout the Cold War, by joining the EU in 1995 and adopting a policy of military non-alignment in peace without the promise of neutrality if a war erupted. This policy was subsequently recalibrated as “no membership in military alliances” in 2007.¹⁵³ Bound by the EU’s

¹⁵³ Bergquist et al., “The Effects,” 10.

mutual defense clause, however, Finland would most likely be unable to stay neutral in any major conflict in Europe.¹⁵⁴ Consequently, the Finns are now bound to their European Union partners' security and have already chosen their side in any major conflict between the East and the West. Finland is still, however, bound to Russia in many practical ways and therefore continues to pursue cooperation with this neighbor. Despite EU (and consequently Finnish) sanctions on Russia, Finland still imported 64 percent of its oil from Russia in 2015, and only Germany and Sweden exported more goods to Finland that year.¹⁵⁵ This important trade relationship, including Finnish dependence on Russian energy resources, continues to play an important role as the country debates NATO membership.

Despite these Russian ties, Finland and Sweden have both sought ways to tie themselves even closer to NATO since the Ukraine crisis began in late 2013.¹⁵⁶ Both countries are members of the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program and its Enhanced Opportunities Program that was created in 2014. Furthermore, both states signed Host Nation Support agreements in 2014. According to a report on the issues involved with Finland's possible NATO membership commissioned by the Finnish government last year, both countries are "nearly as close to the Atlantic Alliance as it is possible to be" as non-member states.¹⁵⁷ The result of this close cooperation is that both countries are essentially "NATO-ready," with very few difficulties remaining for the countries to overcome in order to become members.¹⁵⁸

In addition to their official legal standing as partners of NATO, Finland and Sweden have voluntarily participated in NATO-led operations in the Balkans, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. Indeed, their actions have mirrored those of actual Allies to the point that, according to Leo Michel, "they are now widely regarded as virtual

¹⁵⁴ Richard Milne, "Once a Taboo, NATO Membership Now a Hot Topic in Finland," *Financial Times*, April 17, 2015.

¹⁵⁵ "Finland Trade Statistics," World Integrated Trade Solutions, accessed March 2, 2017, <http://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/FIN>.

¹⁵⁶ Fiskvik, "Nordic Security," 1.

¹⁵⁷ Bergquist et al., "The Effects," 5.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

Allies.”¹⁵⁹ Still, rising threats to European security have caused NATO to renew its emphasis on its collective defense tasks. This has underscored the distinction between NATO members and partners since the latter do not have a seat at the collective defense planning table.¹⁶⁰ This, in turn, makes it clear that unless (or until) Finland and Sweden become NATO Allies they are not entitled to Article 5 (collective defense) benefits.

Russia’s aggressive behavior of late has reignited the debate in Finland over how best to defend the nation’s sovereignty from outside threats, and the question of whether to join NATO is at the core of this discussion. Finnish president Sauli Niinistö recently complained that the loudest voices in this debate hail from the two extremes: those who want to join NATO immediately and those who are fundamentally opposed to ever joining the Alliance.¹⁶¹ Among the political parties, however, the split is between parties that favor immediate membership and those that desire to keep the door to membership open indefinitely without going through it in the near future. Currently only the conservative parties in Finland officially desire NATO membership, and the other parties are split on the issue.¹⁶²

Although the legal process in Finland does not require that a referendum take place in order for the country to join the Alliance, many Finns believe that their government has promised them a referendum on this issue, and 64 percent of Finns recently surveyed say that this would be the best way to make the decision.¹⁶³ Furthermore, Mika Aaltola from the Finnish Institute of International Affairs argues that “Finnish foreign policy is dominated by consensus,” and since Finnish politicians believe a consensus on joining NATO to be impossible for the time being, they are “reluctant to

¹⁵⁹ Leo G. Michel, “Finland, Sweden, and NATO: From ‘Virtual’ to Formal Allies?,” *Institute for National Strategic Studies* no. 265 (February 2011): 2.

¹⁶⁰ Bergquist et al., “The Effects,” 19.

¹⁶¹ Niinistö quoted in “Finnish Defence Chief Views Prospects for Conflict in Baltic,” *Helsingin Sanomat*, January 29, 2017, <http://infoweb.newsbank.com.libproxy.nps.edu/resources/doc/nb/news/1628820C7AECE660?p=AWNB>.

¹⁶² Juhani Niinistö, “News Analysis: Regional Security Balance in Northwestern Europe Awaits Decisions,” *Xinhua News Agency*, March 21, 2016, ProQuest document ID 1774839419.

¹⁶³ “Commentary Says Finland’s Referendum on NATO to Be Hard to Avoid,” *Helsingin Sanomat*, May 5, 2016, ProQuest document ID 1788484879; “Sweden’s Defense Leader Seeks More Funding; Finns Support Referendum on NATO Membership,” *Alaska Dispatch News*, January 14, 2015.

speculate and disagree.”¹⁶⁴ Consequently, although the debate on membership has increased in intensity since the Ukraine crisis began in late 2013, Finnish politicians require another catalyst before a referendum is called for.

One such catalyst could simply be a shift in public support from a majority of Finns being against joining NATO to a majority being in favor. Many argue, however, that the only thing necessary for this to happen is for Finnish politicians to advocate membership openly.¹⁶⁵ Indeed, a recent opinion poll shows that for the first time a majority of Finns would change their stances and support NATO membership if their political leaders encouraged them to do so.¹⁶⁶

Without this happening, the most recent poll, which was conducted by the Finnish government in late 2016, shows that only 25 percent of Finns advocate seeking immediate NATO membership while 61 percent are against near-term membership and 14 percent are undecided. Although polls showed an increase in support for NATO membership after the Ukraine crisis began in late 2013, there has been a slight but consistent decline in support since then. Additionally, when asked if they would support NATO membership if Sweden decided to join the Alliance, only a small increase of Finns supported membership, up to 34 percent in the affirmative with 54 percent against and 11 percent undecided—numbers almost identical to those in 2007. That said, a vast majority of Finns view cooperation with NATO and the United States as positive, while 59 percent of Finns said in 2016 that they will be in a less safe world in the next five years than they are in the present—a higher number than any year since the question was first asked in 1990, with the exception of 2015.¹⁶⁷ These poll numbers tell the story of a Finnish population that recognizes that it is in an increasingly volatile world but is divided on how best to respond to the issues that Finland faces. While many Finns want

¹⁶⁴ Matti Huuhtanen, “Finnish Report Highlights Russian Threat of NATO Membership,” Associated Press, April 29, 2016, <http://infoweb.newsbank.com.libproxy.nps.edu/resources/doc/nb/news/15C8DAD5D0CF4C88?p=AWNB>.

¹⁶⁵ Michel, “Finland, Sweden, and NATO,” 9.

¹⁶⁶ Wolff, “The Future of NATO Enlargement,” 14–15.

¹⁶⁷ “ABDI (MTS) December 2016 Figures in English,” The Advisory Board for Defence Information, [http://www.defmin.fi/files/3578/ABDI_\(MTS\)_December_2016_figures_in_english.pdf](http://www.defmin.fi/files/3578/ABDI_(MTS)_December_2016_figures_in_english.pdf).

to seek shelter under the NATO umbrella, the majority think continued military non-alignment is the safest path to take. Although most Finns are against immediate NATO membership, they are generally agreed that Finland needs to cooperate with NATO, the United States, and their other European partners. Combined with an uncertain security environment, this could easily make for a future swing in public support for NATO.

The reasons that Finland might cite for joining NATO, after all, are abundant. To start, the 2016 government report on possible Finnish membership in NATO noted that “Finland is a Western country, a member of the broader family of like-minded democracies.”¹⁶⁸ Consequently, politicians such as Finland’s former Prime Minister Alexander Stubb have argued that Finland is destined to join NATO because it will “bring [Finns] to [their] natural value base of western democracies.”¹⁶⁹ Additionally, the 2016 Finnish report recognized that if a major conflict in Europe developed both EU and NATO collective defense measures would be activated, but non-NATO states would not have a seat at the NATO planning table.¹⁷⁰ Consequently, Finland could find itself bound to participate in such a conflict but excluded from most joint planning for it. Furthermore, if Finland were attacked alone, only EU mutual defense clauses would be activated, which even the Finnish government’s report admitted would not be sufficient to protect Finnish sovereignty.¹⁷¹ Regional cooperation with other Nordic partners would fare no better, as the report noted that this would “clearly not [be] sufficient given ongoing security challenges.”¹⁷² Many Finnish experts agree that EU and regional partnerships would be insufficient to deter or defeat Russian aggression, and add that this is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future.¹⁷³ Indeed, there is general agreement that such deterrence and defense would require guarantees from the United States, which insists on

¹⁶⁸ Bergquist et al., “The Effects,” 5.

¹⁶⁹ Stubb quoted in Milne, “Once a Taboo.”

¹⁷⁰ Bergquist et al., “The Effects,” 24.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 5.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Michel, “Finland, Sweden, and NATO,” 4.

dealing with security issues through NATO, where Washington has a seat at the table, rather than through the EU.¹⁷⁴

While many Finns desire to join NATO for its security guarantees, others see NATO as a multinational instrument through which Finland can protect its international interests. This group argues that Finland's status as a NATO Partner constrains the country too much, and that Finland must become a member to reap the full benefits of the Alliance.¹⁷⁵ Furthermore, the Finnish government's 2016 report pointed out that Finland could "punch above its weight in the Alliance" due to the significant intelligence-gathering opportunities that its geography affords and its expertise in cyber defense and hybrid warfare.¹⁷⁶ Rather than dilute Finland's power, this bloc of pro-NATO Finns argues, membership in the Alliance would give Finland another platform on which to wield influence and advance its international interests.

Financially speaking, NATO membership would cost Finland very little. Finns would owe approximately EUR 55 million per year and be required to send around 80 people to work for the Alliance. Additionally, if Finland chose to honor the NATO rule requiring Allies to spend 2 percent of their GDP on defense, which only 4 of 28 Allies currently do, it would need to increase its military budget by EUR 730 million a year. Considering that the Finns are currently spending 1.64 percent of their GDP on defense for a current budget of EUR 3.41 billion based on NATO definitions, and they already plan to increase defense spending on their own by 0.3-0.4 percent of their GDP in the 2020s, reaching the NATO goal of 2 percent of GDP is already scheduled to occur whether they join the Alliance or not. Thus, the Finns would need to change little financially in order to join the Alliance.¹⁷⁷

As previously mentioned, opponents to NATO membership for Finland can be separated into two categories: those who never want to join NATO and those who think

¹⁷⁴ Michel, "Finland, Sweden, and NATO," 5.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁷⁶ Bergquist et al., "The Effects," 43.

¹⁷⁷ Bergquist et al., "The Effects," 45; "Finland Beefs Up Military Amid Rising Russian Tensions," Agence France-Presse, February 16, 2017, <http://infoweb.newsbank.com.libproxy.nps.edu/resources/doc/nb/news/16298D81DDEC7A08?p=AWNB>.

that now is simply not the right time. The first group contains policy advocates on both sides of the political spectrum. Those on the right argue that Finland's history has proven that it cannot rely on outsiders to protect the country and that joining the Alliance might hurt Finland's security by diverting resources away from national defense and to fighting "the wars of others."¹⁷⁸ On the left, the arguments are that Finland should be an example of neutralism and pacifism for the world and that integration into multinational organizations will only increase the risks of involvement in international conflicts.¹⁷⁹ The second group typically argues that Finland's existing ties to NATO are sufficient and that Finns would gain little by becoming members while committing themselves unnecessarily to new obligations.¹⁸⁰ Others in this group believe that Finland could quickly join NATO anytime that it desires if it becomes necessary, so Helsinki should wait until it is in fact necessary.¹⁸¹ This sentiment was echoed by the current Prime Minister of Finland, Juha Sipilä, who said in 2015 that, although he is against membership, he believes "there should be a debate on NATO membership" because Finns "have to be very careful with the issue all the time and we can't close the door."¹⁸² This camp appears to contain a plurality of Finns, and they are clearly open to changing their opinions if events unfold that demand such change.

B. SWEDEN

Finland's Nordic neighbor, Sweden, has had a similar path to its current policy of military non-alignment. The Swedish government broke with its centuries-long policy of neutrality by joining the EU in 1995, and since then Stockholm has only further distanced itself from this policy. The Swedish government has not mentioned an intention to remain neutral in a conflict affecting Swedish interests in any foreign policy declaration since

¹⁷⁸ Michel, "Finland, Sweden, and NATO," 7.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 7–8.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² Sipilä quoted in Milne, "Once a Taboo."

2002.¹⁸³ Furthermore, an official report by the Swedish Defence Commission in 2008 stated that “Sweden will not remain passive should a disaster or an attack afflict another [EU] member country or Nordic country,” later explaining that Sweden’s response could include military action.¹⁸⁴ This sentiment was echoed by a Defence Reform Bill passed by Sweden’s legislature in 2010.¹⁸⁵

While abandoning its commitment to remain neutral in any future conflict, Sweden has also become increasingly close to NATO since the fall of the Soviet Union, as described previously. Like Finland, Sweden has participated extensively in NATO peacekeeping operations and training exercises, and it is seemingly as close to the Alliance as is possible without being a member.¹⁸⁶ Also like Finland, this cooperation with NATO has drastically increased since the Ukraine crisis began in late 2013.¹⁸⁷

The current political situation in Sweden is quite tense, especially regarding security and the question of NATO membership. Swedish politicians are clearly responding to Russia’s renewed aggression in the Baltic Sea region. This was evident in their decision in 2016 to remilitarize the strategically important island of Gotland after decades of leaving it defenseless.¹⁸⁸ Swedish political parties are still split, however, on whether the nation should seek NATO membership. Although many parties are divided on the issue, even among themselves, currently only the socialist parties, including the current government, are against NATO membership, while all of the other parties openly support joining the Alliance.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸³ Bo Hugemark, “Historical Background to the Swedish Declaration of Solidarity” in *Friends in Need: Towards a Swedish Strategy of Solidarity with her Neighbours*, ed. Bo Hugemark (Stockholm: Royal Swedish Academy of War Sciences, 2012), 10.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁸⁶ Fiskvik, “Nordic Security,” 3.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁸ Reid Standish, “Fearing the Russian Bear, Sweden Inches toward NATO,” *Standard-Examiner*, May 26, 2016, <http://infoweb.newsbank.com.libproxy.nps.edu/resources/doc/nb/news/15D1FB853880DFD0?p=AWNB>.

¹⁸⁹ Niinistö, “News Analysis.”

The Swedish people are similarly divided on the issue. A poll conducted in the summer of 2016 indicated that 33 percent of Swedes desire membership in the Alliance, while 49 percent do not, and a staggering 18 percent are undecided.¹⁹⁰ These numbers represent an important change from a poll taken in September 2015, which, for the first time, indicated that a plurality of Swedes favored the Alliance, with 41 percent for membership, 39 percent against, and 20 percent undecided.¹⁹¹ According to the survey's manager, Toivo Sjören, one reason for the shift back to a slight plurality opposed to joining the Alliance may be the opposition of key Social Democrat politicians.¹⁹² Still, if one takes a longer-term view of the situation, it is clear that Swedish popular support for NATO membership is growing and that any increasing threats to European security from Russia might easily sway undecided Swedes in favor of membership. According to Robbie Gramer, the associate director of the Transatlantic Security Initiative at the Atlantic Council, the issue is "still very controversial... but the growing number of undecided people shows that a shift is taking place.... It's a prelude to a prelude of NATO membership."¹⁹³

There are, after all, many considerations that urge the Swedes to favor membership, including factors that are specific to Sweden. First among these is the relatively recent but striking realization that the Swedish armed forces, which have a long and proud history of being extremely adept and capable, are now completely insufficient to protect Swedish sovereignty on their own. Military spending cuts in the post-Cold War era had such an impact on the Swedish military that its then supreme commander, General Sverker Göransson, publically stated in December 2012 that Sweden could only resist for a week if attacked.¹⁹⁴ This statement was later confirmed by a Swedish military college, which said that "the military does not have a credible ability to defend all of

¹⁹⁰ "Swedes Have a Change of Heart on NATO Once More," *The Local*, July 7, 2016, <http://www.thelocal.se/20160707/more-swedes-now-against-nato-membership>.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Standish, "Fearing the Russian Bear."

¹⁹⁴ General Sverker Göransson, interview with Mikael Holmström, "Försvar med tidsgräns" ("Defense with Time Limit"), *Svenska Dagbladet*, December 30, 2012, <https://www.svd.se/forsvar-med-tidsgrans>, translation by OpenSource.gov, EUP20130103340009.

Sweden” so it would be required to rely on international help.¹⁹⁵ This judgment was reinforced again by a 2016 report commissioned by the Swedish government on the country’s security, which stated that Sweden “would be dependent on outside support to maintain its sovereignty in an evolving military crisis.”¹⁹⁶ Additionally, this report stated that “EU cooperation will remain of limited importance for Sweden’s defence capabilities” and that “earlier ambitions among some of the Member States that, over time, the EU would take over NATO’s role in Europe have gradually been abandoned.”¹⁹⁷ Former NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, who himself hails from the Nordic region (a former prime minister of Denmark), stated unequivocally that Sweden cannot expect NATO’s help in a conflict unless it becomes a member. Considering that it would take at least three weeks for the U.S. to reinforce Sweden in a conflict, one can see why Swedes might be worried.¹⁹⁸

Still, there are many Sweden-specific opposing influences that help keep the country out of the Alliance. Left-leaning parties that oppose NATO membership typically argue that Sweden would have to forfeit some sovereignty to the Alliance and that Sweden would only be a minor player in NATO if it joined.¹⁹⁹ A subset of this argument is that NATO would want to install nuclear weapons on Swedish soil, even though the cases of Denmark and Norway make clear that NATO would not have that authority.²⁰⁰

What may be the most politically potent argument against membership, however, stems from the belief that Sweden avoided both world wars through neutrality and was able to maintain an advantageous position throughout the Cold War due to non-alignment. Furthermore, during the Cold War Sweden secretly prepared to provide aid to

¹⁹⁵ Matt Ford, “After Crimea, Sweden Flirts with Joining NATO,” *Atlantic: Web Edition Articles*, March 12, 2014, <http://infoweb.newsbank.com/resources/doc/nb/news/14C8F58ED00034E8?p=AWNB>.

¹⁹⁶ “Security in a New Era,” Inquiry on Sweden’s International Defence and Security Cooperation, <http://www.government.se/contentassets/989ee3fb59c545288713515805e82279/summary.pdf>, 4.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁹⁸ Ford, “After Crimea.”; “Swedish NATO Membership Could Help Prevent Russian Aggression in Baltic Region,” LETA News Agency, September 2, 2016, <http://infoweb.newsbank.com/resources/doc/nb/news/15F270CE8963D6D0?p=AWNB>.

¹⁹⁹ Huuhtanen, “Finnish Report Highlights Russian Threat.”

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

and receive help from NATO if a conflict broke out, and according to a noted professor at the Royal Swedish Academy of War Sciences, Bo Hugemark, “the difference between then and now was primarily that now we talk out loud about it.”²⁰¹ Consequently, many Swedes may feel that they do not need to fix what is not broken—non-alignment with the implied protection of NATO served them well during the Cold War, and it may serve them well in what many are calling the beginning of the Second Cold War.

C. COMBINED AND COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

In addition to Russia’s major aggressive moves in Georgia and Ukraine, Moscow has also sought to incite fear in Finland and Sweden by directly targeting them with unprecedented rhetoric, anti-Western diplomatic moves, and military posturing. Russian military aircraft have violated both countries’ airspace, and a Russian submarine was caught in Sweden’s coastal waterways in 2014.²⁰² The Russian military presence in and above the Baltic Sea is higher now than at any point since the Cold War.²⁰³ Russia has scared these two Nordic countries with aggressive talk about nuclear weapons and made clear that, if they decide to join NATO, Russia will, according to Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, “take all necessary military-technical measures” in retaliation.²⁰⁴ According to an article written jointly in 2016 by the prime ministers of Finland and Sweden, Juha Sipilä and Stefan Löfven, “Russia’s reprehensible actions against Ukraine” and increased “military activity in and around the Baltic Sea Region” face the Nordic neighbors “with the most serious threat against European security since the end of the Cold War.”²⁰⁵

²⁰¹ Hugemark, “Historical Background,” 14.

²⁰² Wolff, “The Future of NATO Enlargement,” 14–15; Huuhtanen, “Finnish Report Highlights Russian Threat.”

²⁰³ Bergquist et al., “The Effects,” 13.

²⁰⁴ Huuhtanen, “Finnish Report Highlights Russian Threat.”; “Sweden and Finland Consider NATO Membership,” Stratfor Geopolitical Diary, September, 2015, <https://www.stratfor.com/geopolitical-diary/sweden-and-finland-consider-nato-membership>.

²⁰⁵ Juha Sipilä and Stefan Löfven, “Long-term Perspective in Foreign and Security Policy Creates Stability,” http://valtioneuvosto.fi/en/article/-/asset_publisher/long-term-perspective-in-foreign-and-security-policy-creates-stability?_101_INSTANCE_3qmUeJgIxEK_groupId=10616.

Interestingly, Russia's threats against these two Nordic neighbors tend to have a polarizing effect, pushing many Finns and Swedes to desire NATO membership all the more, while convincing others that membership is not worth causing an unpredictable but certainly negative response from Russia. It would appear that Swedes, who do not share a border with Russia, are more likely to be in the former category, while Finns are more likely to decide that NATO membership is not worth the risk.

Indeed, this subtle difference in majority reactions to Russian threats by Swedes and Finns may play a large part in explaining why Swedes are more supportive of joining the Alliance than their Finnish neighbors. As a former Swedish ambassador to Russia, Tomas Bertelman, explains, while "some may actually see [Russian provocations] as a reminder of the dangers we might face if we challenge the Russians by becoming members of NATO... the large majority in Sweden obviously perceive it the other way around: it reminds them that being non-aligned means being undefined."²⁰⁶ Annie Loof, the leader of the Center Party, responded to Lavrov's words by saying that "our foreign and security policy is decided by Sweden, not by Russian threats."²⁰⁷

An analysis of Finnish sources and commentaries, however, reveals a more cautious approach to handling Russian threats than that in Sweden. One such example comes from Aaltola, who explains that "Finns don't usually speculate about the possibility of war, but in the case of NATO membership they fear Russia's reaction could be disastrous."²⁰⁸ This more pessimistic reaction is associated with the belief that Russia would more harshly oppose Finland's accession to NATO than Sweden's. Moreover, Finland is far more vulnerable than Sweden to trade restrictions from Russia.²⁰⁹ Furthermore, Finland survived the Cold War largely by maintaining a positive bilateral relationship with Russia, and this would likely be lost if Finland joined the Alliance. The Finnish government's report also speculated that Russia might attempt to "politically

²⁰⁶ Standish, "Fearing the Russian Bear."

²⁰⁷ Huuhtanen, "Finnish Report Highlights Russian Threat."

²⁰⁸ Mika Aaltola quoted in Huuhtanen, "Finnish Report Highlights Russian Threat."

²⁰⁹ "Sweden and Finland Consider NATO Membership."

activate the ethnic Russians living in Finland” in response to NATO membership talks and noted that “during the accession process the atmosphere would be poisoned.”²¹⁰

There are certainly many Finns who poke holes in this reaction, however. According to the same government report, “Norway’s ability as a NATO member to sustain a similar ‘Russian agenda’ points to the reversibility of such a state of affairs,” an observation which leaves room for hope of recovering any lost relationship with Russia.²¹¹ Timo Soini, the leader of the Finns party, points out a fault with the idea that Finland should avoid NATO membership in order to escape repercussions from Russia: “when times are bad it is not the right time and when times are good there is no reason to join [NATO].”²¹² Furthermore, President Niinistö stated in January 2017 that sanctions against Russia will not be ended until Russia’s illegal actions in Ukraine are reversed.²¹³ These sanctions continue to sour relations between Helsinki and Moscow, leading one to wonder how much fear Finnish politicians still have of poor relations with Russia.

Although the exact Russian response if Finland or Sweden joined the Alliance is impossible to predict, many experts have identified a pattern in Russian responses to NATO enlargement that may hold true if NATO expanded in the Nordic region. According to both Finnish and Swedish government reports issued in 2016, this pattern includes three steps. First, Russia opposes the enlargement using diplomatic and economic pressure, and then Moscow accepts the fact that the enlargement has taken place before finally allowing things to return to the *status quo ante*.²¹⁴ Both reports also suggested that Russia would not dare engage in military aggression against either country if they joined NATO, since this action would trigger an Article 5 response from the whole Alliance.²¹⁵

²¹⁰ Bergquist et al., “The Effects,” 53.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Milne, “Once a Taboo.”

²¹³ “Finnish, Ukrainian Presidents See No End to Russia Sanctions,” *Helsingin Sanomat*, January 24, 2017, <http://infoweb.newsbank.com/resources/doc/nb/news/1626897152413BA8?p=AWNB>.

²¹⁴ “Security in a New Era,” 11; Bergquist et al., “The Effects,” 53–54.

²¹⁵ “Security in a New Era,” 11; Bergquist et al., “The Effects,” 47.

Although the same hesitation to start an open conflict with NATO will also likely prevent Putin from attacking the Baltic states, fear of this possibility acts as a strong force that pushes both Finland and Sweden closer to joining NATO. Indeed, members of the Nordic community widely agree that a relatively near-term crisis in the Baltic Sea region is completely possible.²¹⁶ Experts believe that it would take Russia's military only a matter of days to take control of the Baltic states, and recapturing them would be a difficult task for NATO. This is due to Russia's buildup of Anti-Access Area Denial assets in the Russian territory of Kaliningrad, which would make it difficult to reinforce the Baltic states by land or air. Access to Finnish and especially Swedish territory and waters would allow the circumvention of these Russian assets, greatly enhancing NATO's ability to protect the Baltic states. Many scholars, both within the Nordic region and outside, argue that Finland and Sweden are in fact the keys to NATO's defense of the region.²¹⁷ The island of Gotland would play a particularly important role in this situation, and both the Russian and NATO forces would desire access to the island. According to the Swedish government's report, in addition to other analyses, Gotland's importance would be so great that Sweden would certainly be drawn into any crisis in the region whether a member of NATO or not.²¹⁸ Finland's chief of defense, General Jarmo Lindberg, agrees with this analysis, stating in January 2017 that "any large-scale operation" in the region by Russia would necessarily involve Finland and Sweden.²¹⁹ Furthermore, even if they were not forced into the fray by outside action, Finland and Sweden have vowed to protect their Baltic neighbors, and following through on this promise would not only be diplomatically important but strategically crucial as well.²²⁰ Consequently, Russian threats of aggression in the Baltic region give Finland and Sweden one more reason to make the leap to NATO membership, since doing so would

²¹⁶ Fiskvik, "Nordic Security," 2; Wahlback, "Nordic Solidarity," 59.

²¹⁷ Luke Coffey and Daniel Kochis, "The Role of Sweden and Finland in NATO's Defense of the Baltic States," *The Heritage Foundation* no. 4554 (April 28, 2016): 1; Wahlback, "Nordic Solidarity," 53–54; Wolff, "The Future of NATO Enlargement," 14.

²¹⁸ "Security in a New Era," 3; "Swedish NATO Membership Could Help Prevent Russian Aggression in Baltic Region."

²¹⁹ "Finnish Defence Chief Views Prospects for Conflict in Baltic."

²²⁰ Bergquist et al., "The Effects," 15; Wahlback, "Nordic Solidarity," 59.

further deter Russian action in the region and allow the Alliance to better protect the Baltic states if a crisis did emerge.

Additionally, Finland's and Sweden's already extraordinarily close ties to NATO create a paradox that may be problematic for the countries. Russia may already view these countries in the same way that they view NATO Allies, which could lead Moscow to preemptively target these two Nordic countries as part of any attack against NATO. Thus, Helsinki and Stockholm may be viewed as NATO Allies already without actually benefitting from any of the collective defense guarantees or deterrence measures that come from a subscription to Article 5 of the Washington Treaty.²²¹

Adding to the pro-NATO argument in Finland and Sweden, Brexit will likely push both Finland and Sweden closer to joining the Alliance, and possibly even over the line and into the Alliance. François Heisbourg, a French security expert and chairman of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, argued last year that Brexit will weaken the EU's mutual defense capabilities so much that any Finns or Swedes who argue that EU protection is adequate will no longer be able to do so.²²² Consequently, it is likely that the countries will see a greater need for NATO protection after the United Kingdom leaves the EU.²²³

This effect may be magnified by the rise of Donald Trump to the presidency of the United States. Although there are arguments on both sides of the issue, Trump's presidency may push Finland and Sweden closer to joining NATO than ever before. Due to the shortfalls of the other security arrangements already discussed, one of the Nordic neighbors' primary strategic objectives remains to keep the United States engaged in the security of Europe.²²⁴ This relationship with the United States is now in question for policy makers in both countries. General Lindberg recently described Trump's election as one of the two biggest "security policy risks of Europe," right next to the "aggressive

²²¹ Bergquist et al., "The Effects," 21.

²²² "Security Expert Expects Potential Brexit to Accelerate Finland's NATO Debate," *Helsingin Sanomat*, June 20, 2016, ProQuest document ID 1797859346.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Michel, "Finland, Sweden, and NATO," 5.

power politics” of Russian president Putin.²²⁵ From his perspective, “Trump is obviously not particularly interested in protecting Europe against the threat of Russia.”²²⁶ Similarly, Hans Wallmark, the defense spokesman for the frontrunners in the next Swedish election, the Moderates, fears that bilateral security guarantees with the United States will be weakened under Trump, so “it’s better that we seek the strength in cooperating with 28 [NATO] countries rather in just one nation.”²²⁷ In this way Finland and Sweden can receive security guarantees not just from the United States, but from Canada and all European NATO powers, including the nuclear deterrence provided by the United Kingdom and France. This benefit will be even more pertinent once the United Kingdom leaves the EU, since any hope of British protection will then only be found under NATO auspices. Lastly, it would be far easier for Trump to abandon bilateral security arrangements with Finland or Sweden than to abandon NATO, so these two Nordic states may see another reason to join the Alliance—to solidify their transatlantic commitments.

On the other hand, Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallström recently argued that the uncertainty about U.S. policy regarding NATO and European security more generally brought by President Trump makes it an especially poor time to discuss joining the Alliance: “The idea that Sweden would become safer by abandoning our non-alignment in a situation of utmost uncertainty is absurd.”²²⁸ In a separate interview with the *New York Times*, Wallström explained that Sweden will maintain the status quo “especially now, when we don’t know what will happen with NATO with the new commander in chief in the United States... There’s a lot of uncertainty. We don’t know what Trump will do with NATO.”²²⁹ Perhaps this uncertainty will be alleviated, however, after Trump’s February 2017 address to Congress, in which he said that U.S. “foreign policy calls for a direct, robust and meaningful engagement with the world. It

²²⁵ Lindberg quoted in “Finnish Defence Chief Views Prospects for Conflict in Baltic.”

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Richard Milne, “Sweden’s Debate about NATO Intensifies after U.S. Election,” *Financial Times*, November 22, 2016.

²²⁸ Margot Wallström, “Sweden Will Continue to Play Its Part in Security,” *Financial Times*, December 5, 2016.

²²⁹ Somini Sengupta, “Diplomat Talks about Standing Up to Trump,” *New York Times*, December 20, 2016.

is American leadership based on vital security interests that we share with our allies all across the globe. We strongly support NATO.”²³⁰ This reassurance about NATO’s future may serve to dismantle the anti-NATO argument posed by Wallström while doing nothing to weaken the argument that Trump may not renew bilateral security agreements with Finland and Sweden—accords that he may not view as fair or beneficial to Americans. The outcome may be a net-positive for the pro-NATO bloc in both countries.

Finnish and Swedish governments have recently and repeatedly assured each other that they will not surprise the other with an offer to join NATO. Both countries joined the EU at the same time, and it has been widely believed that they would either join NATO together or not join at all. The conventional wisdom has been that joining together would be the wisest course, since if Finland joined alone it would be a NATO outpost that would be difficult to defend, and that, if Sweden joined alone, Finland would be more vulnerable than it currently is and Stockholm would be faced once again with the “Finland question.”²³¹

Recently, however, some Swedes have challenged this traditional thinking and have argued that it is now time for Sweden to join NATO whether Finland joins or not. Swedish commentator Mats Johansson recently argued in the popular Swedish newspaper *Svenska Dagbladet* that “Sweden should wish Finland well on the road it has chosen, and Sweden should develop its defense simply minding its own interests.”²³² Many experts even argue that if the pro-NATO non-Socialist Alliance regains control in the next Swedish election, which it is currently favored to do, it may quickly decide to seek membership regardless of the Finnish position.²³³ If this comes to fruition, it may act as the locomotive that drives not only Sweden to seek NATO membership but Finland as

²³⁰ “Remarks by President Trump in Joint Address to Congress,” The White House, February 28, 2017, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/02/28/remarks-president-trump-joint-address-congress>.

²³¹ Bergquist et al., “The Effects,” 6.

²³² Niinistö, “News Analysis.”

²³³ “Commentary Says Finland’s Referendum on NATO to Be Hard to Avoid.”; Milne, “Sweden’s Debate about NATO Intensifies.”

well. After all, if Swedish politicians notify their Finnish counterparts that Sweden is going to join the Alliance, then majority opinion among Finnish politicians may be tipped in favor of joining the Alliance as well. This change in thinking among politicians, according to polls, would likely result in the Finnish people supporting NATO accession as well. Finnish support for membership would, in turn, further strengthen Swedish resolve to join the Alliance, and referenda could pass in both countries. Such is the symbiotic relationship between the two peoples and governments.

Conversely, opponents of NATO membership in Sweden hope that Finnish reluctance to join NATO for the time being will prevent Sweden from joining as well.²³⁴ Thus, it appears that within the close relationship between Finland and Sweden, the former has emerged as a force that keeps the two states non-aligned while the latter is increasingly pushing the duo towards NATO membership. If this dynamic continues, which force will win out? Unless there is a fundamental change in the NATO debate in either country, the ball appears to be in Sweden's court. Swedish politicians will either try to join NATO, or they will wait for Finland to be ready first.

For the time being, however, it is unlikely that either country will seek NATO membership. In a joint statement in 2016 Prime Ministers Sipilä and Löfven said that they "believe military non-alignment serves us well."²³⁵ Barring any major international events, this is likely to be the continuing policy, at least until Sweden elects a new Parliament in 2018 and Finland follows in 2019.

In the meantime, Finland and Sweden are seeking increased cooperation with their Nordic neighbors and with the Baltic states. According to Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallström, such cooperation has "already deepened a lot" since the election of Donald Trump.²³⁶ In addition to the U.S. election, Brexit has caused uncertainty in the region that is driving increased cooperation among Nordic and Baltic states.²³⁷ Sweden and Norway recently announced increased cooperation in protecting Baltic sea lanes and

²³⁴ Niinistö, "News Analysis."

²³⁵ Sipilä and Löfven, "Long-term Perspective."

²³⁶ Milne, "Once a Taboo."

²³⁷ Ibid.

ports, and there has been increased activity within the Nordic Defense Cooperation (NORDEF) in recent years.²³⁸ While this trend may continue, neither Nordic nor Baltic unity is seen as a means of replacing the security guarantees provided by NATO. Nordic officials do not believe that they have the power necessary to deter or defend against an outside attack.²³⁹ Thus, the question of NATO membership will remain for Finland and Sweden regardless of how close the countries in the region become.

D. CONCLUSION

There appear to be only a few paths that may lead to NATO membership for Finland or Sweden in the next decade or so. The first, as previously described, is if the non-Socialist Alliance returns to power in Sweden and argues for membership, which may in turn lead to Finnish membership as well. The second path would arise if Russia created a crisis in the Baltic region similar to the one it provoked in Ukraine. This would hit closer to home for Finland and Sweden and would likely push them into the Alliance.²⁴⁰ The third scenario would unfold if Finland or Sweden were brought into a conflict against Russia, whether by fulfilling their EU security obligations or by being attacked themselves (either militarily or by Russian hybrid warfare tactics). Fearing for their own security, and with little to lose, these two Nordic neighbors would likely seek protection from NATO.

Finland and Sweden both take their national security seriously, and their policies of political-military non-alignment have been at the center of their national security policies for generations. They will not change these policies lightly. In their joint article the countries' prime ministers explained that they "do not believe in rapid policy changes in security policy—they are especially poorly suited to matters that concern our countries' security. Finland and Sweden drive their security policy with a long-term

²³⁸ Milne, "Once a Taboo."

²³⁹ Michel, "Finland, Sweden, and NATO," 5.

²⁴⁰ Fiskvik, "Nordic Security," 4; Michael Knigge, "Sweden Could Join NATO if Russia's Aggression Persists," *Deutsche Welle*, September 17, 2015, <http://www.dw.com/en/sweden-could-join-nato-if-russias-aggression-persists/a-18720366>.

perspective.”²⁴¹ Thus, major changes must occur to precipitate any security policy changes in these two countries. Although there are a great number of factors pushing the countries towards seeking NATO membership, there are also powerful influences keeping them from this decision. Unsurprisingly, scholars are split between which powers will win out in the near future, with authors such as Andrew Wolff arguing that they may soon join, and others like Jannicke Fiskvik suggesting that this is unlikely.²⁴² Insider politicians are equally unsure. Sweden’s former Prime Minister, Carl Bildt, predicted in 2016 that “in ten years it is highly likely that Sweden and Finland will be members,” but many other elite experts believe the exact opposite.²⁴³ In the end, no one can be certain. That said, the *Norwegian Daily* argued last year that “Sweden and Finland belong in the alliance, together with Iceland, Denmark, and Norway” because “NATO is not just a military association; it is also a community of values,” and it is for this reason that it seems highly unlikely that Finland and Sweden will remain out of the Alliance forever.²⁴⁴

²⁴¹ Sipilä and Löfven, “Long-term Perspective.”

²⁴² Wolff, “The Future of NATO Enlargement,” 15; Fiskvik, “Nordic Security,” 4.

²⁴³ “Sweden Will Be a NATO Member in Ten Years,” *The Local*, July 6, 2016, <http://www.thelocal.se/20160706/sweden-will-be-a-nato-member-in-ten-years>.

²⁴⁴ “Norwegian Daily Urges Swedish, Finnish Membership in NATO,” *BBC Monitoring European*, July 14, 2016, ProQuest document ID 1803691923.

V. PROSPECTS OF NATO ACCEPTANCE

In order for Finland and Sweden to finally join NATO, two sets of decisions need to be made: the Nordic neighbors need to decide to join the Alliance, and the Allies need to unanimously decide to accept the new countries. While prior sections of this thesis have addressed questions regarding the former decision, this section aims to assess the prospects for decisions by others to welcome Finland and Sweden into NATO. To do this, likely choices in the most influential NATO members will be analyzed in the greatest depth, namely France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The primary research question to be addressed, then, is whether these countries would accept Finland and Sweden into the Alliance if they requested membership. Since governments change relatively frequently, and politicians rarely address this question directly, a variety of types of supporting evidence will be used to answer it, such as analyzing levels of cooperation between Finland and Sweden and the Allies, and looking at the factors that may or may not make Finland and Sweden suitable Allies. Ultimately, it will be argued that the NATO Allies would in current circumstances probably welcome these countries into the Alliance with open arms, but that this judgment is subject to change even in the near future due to the unpredictability of decision-makers such as Presidents Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin.

The support of France, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom for the accession of Finland and Sweden to the Alliance is crucial, since it is impossible for these Nordic countries to join without unanimous support from all NATO members.²⁴⁵ Furthermore, as some of the most powerful members of the Alliance, France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United States could potentially sway lesser powers to either support or not support another round of NATO enlargement encompassing Finland and Sweden. Consequently, the research question asking if these existing NATO members would support an enlargement of the Alliance to include Finland and Sweden is an important and timely one. As Russia emerges as an increasingly aggressive revisionist

²⁴⁵ “NATO Fact Sheet,” North Atlantic Treaty Organization, July 2016, http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2016_07/20160627_1607-factsheet-enlargement-eng.pdf.

power, the likelihood of Finland and Sweden seeking protection under the NATO defense umbrella increases, and thus the importance of this research increases as well.

This chapter discusses the factors that could make Finland and Sweden either good or bad candidates for membership before reviewing the experience that Finland and Sweden have in cooperating with the Allies in a joint context. The chapter then analyzes the research questions as they apply to France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United States. An overall comparative analysis and conclusions complete the chapter.

Analyzing the potential membership of Finland and Sweden in NATO from the Alliance's perspective reveals far more benefits than disadvantages. Indeed, the Nordic countries are often described as "the best, most active and compatible, and in that sense the most appealing" prospective NATO Allies in the world.²⁴⁶ This is largely because these Nordic countries are viewed as well-developed Western countries with positive records as participants in NATO's PfP and as members of the EU.²⁴⁷ From an ideological standpoint, Finland and Sweden have long operated as successful democracies that routinely earn praise from independent organizations such as the CATO Institute and Freedom House for their high levels of freedom and transparency.²⁴⁸ Culturally, politically, and ideologically they are far more similar to most NATO Allies than certain recent additions to the Alliance.

Furthermore, realist observers in NATO member states can find plenty of reasons why Finland and Sweden would be good additions due to the military advantages that they would bring the Alliance. The most important such advantage, which was discussed in more detail in Chapter IV, is the geostrategic positioning that Finland and Sweden would provide the Alliance in order to help deter (or counter) a Russian attack on the Baltic states. Indeed, many experts believe that NATO access to Finnish and Swedish territory is the key to defending the Baltics. Furthermore, since a failure to deter a

²⁴⁶ "Finland, Sweden Move Together in NATO Issue," *Helsingin Sanomat*, April 29, 2014, <http://infoweb.newsbank.com.libproxy.nps.edu/resources/doc/nb/news/14D8A463E8D30CC0?p=AWNB>.

²⁴⁷ Bergquist et al., "The Effects," 50.

²⁴⁸ See <https://www.cato.org/human-freedom-index> and <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2017>.

Russian attack on the Baltic states would trigger a NATO response under Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, it is widely agreed that the Baltic states are now the most likely place in the world that a Third World War might start.²⁴⁹ Consequently, adding Finland and Sweden to NATO's roster would serve to accomplish one of the Alliance's most important goals at the moment: increasing the deterrent against a Russian attack on the Baltic states. Apart from the benefits that access to their territory would provide NATO in this regard, Finland and Sweden have also greatly increased their involvement in patrolling the Baltic Sea and in conducting military exercises in the region.²⁵⁰ Their resulting expertise and experience in the region would be quite valuable to the Alliance.

Additionally, far from adding a new region that NATO would be required to protect, Finland and Sweden joining NATO would consolidate the Nordic and Baltic regions into a common strategic space that would be easier to defend.²⁵¹ Since Denmark and Norway are already in the Alliance, NATO must already consider how to defend the Nordic region to which Finland and Sweden belong. Thus, defending a new region would not be added to NATO's plate, but it would rather be far easier to defend both the Nordic and Baltic regions. Furthermore, as explained by scholar Andrew Wolff of Dickinson College, "Finnish and Swedish admission would also bolster NATO's strategy in the Arctic, which is an area of future economic and geostrategic competition between the West and Russia."²⁵²

Finland and Sweden also have expertise in several areas outside the Baltic states that would be beneficial to the Alliance. Finland's geography lends it the unique ability to monitor a large portion of Russia's Eastern border, and the country's natural knowledge of the landscape in the region could prove useful in any future conflict with Russia.²⁵³ Furthermore, cyber defense is a warfare domain that is increasingly vital when dealing

²⁴⁹ Coffey and Kochis, "The Role of Sweden and Finland in NATO's Defense of the Baltic States," 1.; Justyna Gotkowska and Piotr Szymański, "NATO's Presence in the Baltic States—Reassurance for Its Allies or Deterrence for Russia?," *OSW Commentary* 169 (April 2015): 7.; "Security in a New Era," 3.

²⁵⁰ Gotkowska and Szymański, "NATO's Presence," 4.

²⁵¹ Bergquist et al., "The Effects," 49.

²⁵² Wolff, "The Future of NATO Enlargement," 14.

²⁵³ Bergquist et al., "The Effects," 43.

with Russia, and it happens to be an area of expertise for both Finland and Sweden.²⁵⁴ The same can be said of the Nordic countries regarding the hybrid warfare tactics employed by Russia in Ukraine and elsewhere. These methods have long been a foundation of Finnish and Swedish territorial defense.²⁵⁵

Additionally, Finland and Sweden have militaries that already completely meet NATO standards and are consistent with the Alliance's operating procedures, even exceeding the level of compatibility attained by some newly accepted NATO members.²⁵⁶ Furthermore, both countries are viewed as overall security providers that take their national defense requirements seriously and that would contribute to NATO's collective defense.²⁵⁷ In fact, Sweden even helped the Baltic states meet NATO membership requirements by supplying them weapons and assisting with the expansion of their defense forces.²⁵⁸ The integration of the countries' air defenses would be particularly advantageous for the Alliance, as they would greatly aid in protecting the Baltic Sea region as a whole.²⁵⁹

The Finnish and Swedish militaries are only set to get stronger in the short and medium term as well. As discussed in Chapter IV, Russian aggression has caused both countries' governments to recently announce plans to expand their military capabilities, making them only more desirable as Allies in the near future.²⁶⁰

An additional reason why Allies would likely accept Finland and Sweden into NATO can be found in their existing EU memberships. As signatories to the EU's Treaty of Lisbon, the 22 members of NATO that are also members of the EU are already obligated to provide aid to Finland and Sweden if they were to be attacked, as outlined in

²⁵⁴ Bergquist et al., "The Effects," 43.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ "Finland, UK Sign Defense Protocol," The Philippines News Agency, July 10, 2016, ProQuest document ID 1802696254.; Bergquist et al., "The Effects," 40.

²⁵⁷ "Security in a New Era," 10.

²⁵⁸ Hugemark, "Historical Background," 24.

²⁵⁹ Bergquist et al., "The Effects," 38.

²⁶⁰ "Finland Beefs Up Military Amid Rising Russian Tensions," Agence France-Presse, February 16, 2017, <http://infoweb.newsbank.com.libproxy.nps.edu/resources/doc/nb/news/16298D81DDEC7A08?p=AWNB>.

Article 42 (7) of the Treaty of the European Union. Furthermore, if the majority of EU member states came under attack, it is hard to imagine that the United States would not come to their aid. Thus, in virtually any realistic scenario that might occur, the major players in NATO are already legally or politically obligated to help defend Finland and Sweden, so their addition to the Alliance as members would not be a complete change from the current situation. In addition to this, their membership in the EU speaks to how close they are politically with major NATO players like France, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom.²⁶¹

While Finland and Sweden clearly have plenty to offer that would benefit the Alliance, their membership would also cause few internal problems for NATO.²⁶² Their membership would improve EU-NATO cooperation, and it would by all accounts be technically straightforward and pose few practical difficulties.²⁶³ Finland and Sweden have reached such a high level of interoperability with NATO that joining the Alliance would in most respects be an administrative change; even joining NATO's command structure would be an easy task for NATO and these two Nordic countries to accomplish.²⁶⁴

Lastly, if the NATO Allies decided to endorse Finnish and Swedish membership in the Alliance, they would thereby deal a significant blow to Russian foreign policy. As noted in Chapter IV, Moscow has repeatedly gone to great lengths to prevent a Nordic expansion of NATO and clearly views the prospect of Finnish and Swedish NATO membership as a threat to its foreign policy goals. Thus, NATO expansion in the Nordic region would signal a failure of the Russian aggressive threats and warnings that have been aimed at scaring Finland and Sweden into maintaining their policies of military non-alignment; this would in turn be a victory for the Alliance.²⁶⁵

²⁶¹ The UK's withdrawal from the EU is currently scheduled to be completed no later than March 2019. The UK will remain an influential member of NATO.

²⁶² Wolff, "The Future of NATO Enlargement," 14.

²⁶³ Wolff, "The Future of NATO Enlargement," 14.; Bergquist et al., "The Effects," 5–6.

²⁶⁴ Bergquist et al., "The Effects," 37.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 47.

While there are clearly plenty of reasons why NATO members might want to accept Finnish and Swedish membership applications, there are also reasons why they might not. The first of these to be discussed has already been laid out from the Finnish and Swedish perspectives in Chapter IV—that is, that accepting the countries into the Alliance could trigger a negative and largely unpredictable response from Russia. This reaction would be drawn out over the likely lengthy process of Finland and Sweden conducting referenda or approving legislation on the issue in their respective countries and in order to join the Alliance.²⁶⁶ The Russian response would likely be the same to NATO expansion in the Nordic region as it was to expansion elsewhere, which means that tensions would eventually die down and relations between NATO and Russia would return to normal.

Additionally, however, Finland's accession to NATO membership would effectively double NATO's border with Russia, thereby increasing Russia's ability to attack a NATO member without having to go through a buffer state first. This could potentially play a part in any intra-NATO debate on accepting Finnish membership, but the argument is hampered significantly by the likelihood that NATO members would have to go to Finland's aid whether it is in the Alliance or not. Thus, because Finland's border with Russia is already the EU's border, it would apparently make little difference for most NATO members if the Alliance took responsibility for this border as well. Indeed, EU states such as France, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom could make the argument that NATO adopting this border as well would be beneficial to them, since then it would not only be the EU and Finland defending it but Canada and the United States as well.

Although slightly counter-intuitive, it could also be argued that Finland and especially Sweden could help NATO more right now outside the Alliance than inside it. One reason for this is that as long as the two Nordic countries are not Allies, they do not represent the Alliance and can thereby take a more vigorous stance toward Russia without risking a major war. This autonomy has allowed the countries to regularly

²⁶⁶ Bergquist et al., "The Effects," 48.

challenge Russia in a variety of ways, such as the 2015 incident when Finland dropped depth charges on a suspected Russian submarine in Finnish waters.²⁶⁷

An additional way that Finland and Sweden may be more advantageous to NATO outside the Alliance is that membership would mean that they could no longer deter Russian aggression simply by holding their possible membership over Moscow. As has been noted, Putin has made it clear that he does not want Finland or Sweden to join NATO, which in turn may make him consider whether any aggressive actions he takes will finally push the countries into the Alliance. If Finland and Sweden joined, however, this calculus would be gone, and Putin might feel freer to make aggressive moves in Ukraine or elsewhere. NATO has recognized this possibility, and the think-tank RAND has even urged the United States to use the issue of possible Finnish and Swedish membership in the Alliance against Moscow. A 2016 RAND report argues that “NATO membership in the medium term is possible [for Finland and Sweden], and that possibility should be made clear to Russia and leveraged as an additional deterrent against Russian aggression.”²⁶⁸ Thus, there are legitimate reasons why NATO Allies may desire to postpone Finnish and Swedish membership indefinitely.

Another way to analyze the likely response of key NATO Allies to a membership application from Finland and Sweden is to look at the extent to which the countries involved have worked together in a joint military context. The Nordic countries have been substantially involved in NATO and EU operations and training exercises that have involved most if not all of the most influential NATO Allies—France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United States. This participation has led to the familiarity of the Allies with the political and military institutions of Finland and Sweden, and it could certainly make the Allies more comfortable with the idea of new NATO members in the Nordic region. Furthermore, that Finland and Sweden have been accepted as participants

²⁶⁷ “Finland Fires Warning Shots at ‘Foreign Submarine’ Near Helsinki,” *The Telegraph*, April 28, 2015, accessed July 1, 2017, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/finland/11568042/Finland-fires-warning-shots-at-foreign-submarine-near-Helsinki.html>.

²⁶⁸ Christopher S. Chivvis et al., “NATO’s Northeastern Flank—Emerging Opportunities for Engagement: An Overview,” RAND Corporation, 2016, accessed March 17, 2017, http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR1400/RR1467z1/RAND_RR1467z1.pdf.

and often even hosts of these exercises shows the value that NATO already places on deepening its partnerships with these Nordic neighbors.

Perhaps the most important of these interactions have been the participation of Finnish and Swedish militaries in combat operations led by EU or NATO forces, since this participation shows the Nordic countries' willingness to commit military resources for foreign policy goals. Since NATO membership requires countries to be willing to send their militaries to defend other Allies in the event of an attack, the demonstrated willingness by Finland and Sweden to militarily support foreign interventions for non-Article 5 purposes will greatly help their case for membership if they decide to apply in the future.

Examples of such operations that Finland and Sweden have recently participated in are many. In 1996 both countries sent several hundred soldiers to Bosnia-Herzegovina to join NATO's Stabilization Force, and these two countries have continued contributing troops to NATO's Kosovo Force ever since it began in 1999.²⁶⁹ At the peak of operations in Kosovo, Finland deployed over 900 soldiers, and Sweden sent over 1,000; Finland even became the first non-NATO member to lead one of the three regional multinational task forces of KFOR.²⁷⁰ Both countries also joined the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in 2002, well before it became a NATO-led operation. In ISAF operations, Sweden became the only non-NATO European country to lead a Provincial Reconstruction Team in Afghanistan, and both countries maintained hundreds of troops in the country under ISAF auspices.²⁷¹ Finnish and Swedish troops remain in Afghanistan even today as part of NATO's Resolute Support mission, and in 2015 Sweden committed to continue supporting Afghanistan through 2024.²⁷²

²⁶⁹ Michel, "Finland, Sweden, and NATO," 7, 13; "Contributing Nations," KFOR – Trust and Commitment, accessed March 19, 2017, <http://jfcnaples.nato.int/kfor/about-us/welcome-to-kfor/contributing-nations>.

²⁷⁰ Michel, "Finland, Sweden, and NATO," 7.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 7, 13.

²⁷² "Troop Contributing Nations," North Atlantic Treaty Organization, February 2017, http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2017_03/20170313_2017-03-RSM-Placemat.pdf; "Europe Committed To Continued Long-Term Partnership with Afghanistan," Bakhtar News Agency, December 8, 2015, accessed March 17, 2017, <http://infoweb.newsbank.com/resources/doc/nb/news/1599AEABDCB56938?p=AWNB>.

In addition to these major NATO-led operations, both countries have long been and are still active participants in EU-led military operations in Africa and antipiracy operations near Somalia. Furthermore, Finland is the leading country for the EU's Maritime Surveillance project, in which France, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom all participate.²⁷³

Finland and Sweden have also routinely participated in multinational training exercises with key NATO members, further enhancing their relationships. Finnish and Swedish participation in the annual Baltic Operations (BALTOPS) exercise has increased since the 1990s to the point that the countries are now central to the exercise and participate more than almost any other country. Sweden hosted the NATO exercise in 2014, Swedish territory was used again in 2015, and both Finland and Sweden hosted the event in 2016. Finland and Sweden were also the only countries other than the United States to provide troops for a landing force in 2015, and during BALTOPS 2016 marines from Finland, Germany, Italy, Sweden, and the United States all landed on a Finnish beach together as part of the exercise.²⁷⁴ Through this annual exercise alone, Finland and Sweden have over a decade's worth of experience in training alongside key NATO Allies.

The largest recent NATO exercise, however, was Trident Juncture 2015, which involved around 36,000 people from 30 countries, including Finland, Sweden, and 27 NATO Allies.²⁷⁵ While Finnish and Swedish participation in this exercise was strong, involving multiple ships, squadrons of aircraft, and large numbers of special forces personnel, the 2018 iteration of the event is being hosted by their Nordic neighbor Norway and will be driven by a scenario that involves the region heavily. Consequently,

²⁷³ Michel, "Finland, Sweden, and NATO," 11; "International Crisis Management – The Finnish Defense Forces," Puolustusvoimat, accessed March 21, 2017, <http://puolustusvoimat.fi/en/international-activities/international-crisis-management>; "Finnish Minister Lauds International Defence Cooperation," *Helsingin Sanomat*, December 31, 2011, accessed March 17, 2017, <http://infoweb.newsbank.com/resources/doc/nb/news/13C0C1A141424BD0?p=AWNB>.

²⁷⁴ "BALTOPS 2016 Lands on the Shores of Finland," U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa / U.S. 6th Fleet, accessed March 21, 2017, <http://www.c6f.navy.mil/news/baltops-2016-lands-shores-finland>.

²⁷⁵ "Finland to Send Six Fighter Planes, Special Troops to NATO Drill in Portugal," *Helsingin Sanomat*, September 18, 2015, accessed March 17, 2017, <http://infoweb.newsbank.com/resources/doc/nb/news/158110061CADB490?p=AWNB>.

Finland and Sweden have accepted NATO's invitation to help plan the event, and both countries plan to participate heavily in it.²⁷⁶

Furthermore, Finland and Sweden have joined forces with Norway to host Arctic Challenge Exercises (ACE) every other year since 2013. These events are designed to enhance the joint operational capabilities of participating air forces, and they have grown since 2013 to involve over a hundred aircraft from key Allies such as France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Even more NATO members will participate in ACE 2017, and as with the others before, the event will take place primarily in Lapland—an area in the north of the host countries.²⁷⁷ This event adds further prestige and credibility to Finland and Sweden as dutiful NATO partners and potential future Allies.

In addition to the mutual trust and understanding that Finland and Sweden have built with NATO Allies by cooperating with them in large joint operations and exercises, evidence that France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United States would probably accept them as NATO Allies can be found in the frequent bilateral cooperation that occurs between the states involved.

France, for example, found that it could rely on Finnish and Swedish help in its hour of need after Paris invoked the EU's mutual defense clause in the aftermath of a terrorist attack in 2015. Due to the structure of the EU, triggering this clause led France to enter bilateral negotiations with each of the 27 other EU member states in order to discuss what aid they were willing to provide. Finland and Sweden were willing to help as much as it was possible for them to: for Sweden this meant anything up to and including supplying military support for the French military or police, while "Finland declared on Tuesday [17 November 2015] that the country is not able to give France

²⁷⁶ Sydney J. Freedberg Jr., "Fear of Russia Drives Sweden Closer to NATO," September 13, 2016, accessed 21 March 2017, <http://breakingdefense.com/2016/09/fear-of-russia-drives-sweden-closer-to-nato/>.

²⁷⁷ "Flight Detachments and Air Bases in Arctic Challenge Exercise 17," *Ilmavoimat*, May 4, 2017, accessed July 1, 2017, http://ilmavoimat.fi/en/article/-/asset_publisher/arctic-challenge-exercise-17-lentotoimintaharjoituksen-lentavat-joukot-ja-tukikohdat.

military assistance, but other kinds of assistance.”²⁷⁸ Apart from the likely feeling in Paris that the French now owe the Nordic countries a debt of gratitude, the Finns and Swedes have now shown France that they take their EU security commitments seriously and are willing to take action—precisely what is expected of potential NATO Allies. Consequently, France will likely accept any future Finnish or Swedish applications for NATO membership.

The relationships that Germany has with Finland and Sweden are perhaps even more solid than those that France has with the countries. Germany has long historic ties to both Finland and Sweden, and their relationships have been quite positive in the last century. As discussed in Chapter III, both countries had mutually supportive relationships with Germany in both World Wars, and such friendly relations continue to the present day. While most of their large governmental interactions take place in multinational contexts that have already been discussed, there are some bilateral cases that show a German willingness to work alongside these Nordic countries. For example, in 2006 Finnish and German forces held exercises together in order to prepare the two militaries for their joint EU Rapid Reaction Battle Group deployment in 2007.²⁷⁹ Furthermore, the political closeness of Germany and Sweden allowed the two governments to create a partnership in January 2017 that aims to develop electrified road technology, among other things.²⁸⁰ The two governments also work closely within the EU, even joining forces to start an initiative in the European Defense Agency to increase cooperation between all EU members.²⁸¹ Given Germany’s historic and current close ties with Finland and Sweden, as well as Germany’s cultural, ethnic, and geographic closeness to the Nordic region, it would be surprising if the Germans did not welcome the Finns and the Swedes into the Alliance with open arms.

²⁷⁸ “Swedish Column Says Government to Answer French Request for Assistance,” *BBC Monitoring European*, November 25, 2015, ProQuest document ID 1735889492.

²⁷⁹ Gerard O’Dwyer, “Finns, Germans Test Joint Tactics in Winter Exercise,” *Defense News*, February 20, 2006, ProQuest document ID 734372514.

²⁸⁰ “Scania Welcomes Sweden-Germany Partnership on Mobility and Electrical Roads,” PR Newswire, January 31, 2017, accessed March 17, 2017, <http://infoweb.newsbank.com/resources/doc/nb/news/162429E26CEAEA8?p=AWNB>.

²⁸¹ “Finnish Minister Lauds International Defence Cooperation”

Italy, on the other hand, has much less in common with Finland and Sweden, and deals with them much less frequently on a bilateral basis. All three countries are in the EU, however, and are therefore familiar with each other's politics and institutions. Furthermore, as previously noted, the countries have all cooperated extensively in joint contexts within NATO, the EU, and even the UN. While there is not the overwhelming evidence that Italy would accept Finland and Sweden into the Alliance that there is for other countries, there is also no evidence that suggests Italy would reject Finnish and Swedish applications. As a second tier power that does not often go against the grain, Italy would most likely follow more powerful NATO Allies' decisions and accept the countries into the Alliance.

For its part, the United Kingdom has long been a proponent of Finnish and Swedish membership in NATO. During the Cold War, the United Kingdom extended Sweden assurances that London would come to Sweden's aid if a conflict erupted. In exchange, Sweden provided NATO with intelligence, fortified landing strips to accommodate large NATO bombers, adopted NATO fuel nozzles, and at one point even put the UK in charge of all Swedish military planning.²⁸² This close cooperation has continued in the post-Cold War era. In 2001, British aircraft became the first within NATO to participate in a joint air exercise over Finland.²⁸³ Furthermore, the British signed defense protocols that set the stage for even closer military cooperation with Finland and Sweden in 2016 and 2014, respectively.²⁸⁴ Such signals, along with the long British history of trying to help Finland and Sweden within multinational frameworks, make it clear that the UK would likely accept the countries into the Alliance.

Similarly, bilateral relations between the United States and Finland and Sweden have long suggested that the United States would support their NATO membership. Like the United Kingdom, the United States gave Sweden secret military assurances during the

²⁸² Dalsjö, "The Hidden Rationality," 175–6; Nilsson, "Amber Nine," 288; Dahl, "Sweden: Once a Moral Superpower," 902.

²⁸³ "First ever NATO Aircraft Exercises in Finnish Air Space Begin," *Helsingin Sanomat*, August 05, 2001, accessed March 17, 2017, <http://infoweb.newsbank.com/resources/doc/nb/news/1038D1EBA21708EC?p=AWNB>.

²⁸⁴ "Finland, UK Sign Defense Protocol."

Cold War after failing to get Sweden to join the Alliance as a founding member. Mutual interests discussed previously in this chapter have caused American bilateral relationships with Finland and Sweden to grow rapidly recently: the countries' militaries have become intertwined through arms sales, sharing military components, and officer exchange programs; frameworks for increased bilateral cooperation with the United States were signed by both countries in 2016.²⁸⁵ The election of Donald Trump, however, has called the future of these relationships into question, and has even made the U.S. acceptance of Finnish or Swedish membership applications debatable. Alex Stubb, a former Finnish prime minister, recently expressed concern that Trump might strike a deal with Putin to stop NATO enlargement, and Hans Wallmark, a defense spokesman in Sweden, recently agreed that Trump's rise to power makes Swedish acceptance into NATO "a more open question."²⁸⁶ As of this writing, there does not appear to be any definitive evidence as to what stance Trump will take regarding NATO expansion, but he has recently disavowed his anti-NATO rhetoric and reconfirmed U.S. obligations to the Alliance, so it does not appear that he is significantly changing the U.S. position regarding NATO as a whole.

Looking at potential Finnish and Swedish NATO membership from a comparative standpoint, there are reasons to argue that Sweden would be a more desirable member than Finland from the Alliance's perspective. NATO itself has not indicated that it views the countries differently, but Sweden is a larger country, with more resources for defense, and does not have a direct border with Russia, thus making it easier to defend.²⁸⁷ Furthermore, if Sweden joined without Finland, there would be little issue for the Alliance except for potentially increasing the external danger to Finland from Russia. Conversely, if Finland joined NATO without Sweden, it would be logistically difficult for the Alliance to defend Finland without access to Swedish territory.²⁸⁸ Thus, there is reason to contend that NATO might accept a solitary Swedish application, but perhaps not a Finnish one.

²⁸⁵ "Security in a New Era," 5–6; "Finland Beefs Up Military"; Michel, "Finland, Sweden, and NATO," 5–6, 12.

²⁸⁶ Milne, "Sweden's Debate about NATO Intensifies."

²⁸⁷ "Finland, Sweden Move Together."

²⁸⁸ Bergquist et al., "The Effects," 6, 39.

In the end, the vast array of benefits that NATO would gain by welcoming both Finland and Sweden into the Alliance makes their acceptance the most likely outcome if they were to apply for membership. While politicians in key NATO member governments do not typically publically announce positions regarding Alliance membership for Finland and Sweden, leaders in Helsinki and Stockholm, who are privy to more private declarations of foreign policies, clearly believe that they would be accepted into the Alliance if they were to apply. If they did not believe this, they would not bank their countries' national security policies on the ability to join NATO at the last minute if necessary, as has been discussed in Chapter IV.²⁸⁹ Paradoxically, then, if key Allies such as France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, or the United States changed course and decided that they might not be willing to approve future membership applications from Finland or Sweden, that might cause these two Nordic countries to want to join the Alliance after all.

²⁸⁹ "Finnish President Keeps NATO Membership Door Open, Urges Dialogue with Russia," *BBC Monitoring European*, July 5, 2016, ProQuest document ID 1801549262.

VI. CONCLUSION

Although prior to the Second World War the Nordic countries of Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden all trusted in neutrality to keep them out of conflicts, the aftermath of the war caused each state to reevaluate the efficacy and appropriateness of this policy. In doing so, Denmark and Norway found themselves in similar domestic positions to each other, but in very different situations than their Nordic neighbors Finland and Sweden. Comparatively, Denmark and Norway were far weaker financially and militarily and, having suffered defeat in the war, less trusting in neutrality than Sweden after the war. Most Swedes credited the policy with keeping Sweden mostly out of the war, and the country retained a strong military. While Finland's armed forces had not been destroyed in the war, the country was stuck with a harsh treaty that forced it to pay heavy reparations to the Soviets, forfeit much of its land, and allow a Soviet military base to be positioned just outside Helsinki. Consequently, Finland had completely lost trust that the West would come to its aid against the Soviets.

As a result of their distinct experiences, neighbors, and locations, the Nordic countries reacted to Soviet pressure after the war differently. Moscow's pressure pushed Norway even closer to the West, while it had almost no effect on Sweden's actions. Denmark felt comparatively little Soviet pressure after the Red Army left the Danish island of Bornholm in 1946. These differing reactions and levels of pressure led to an impasse in negotiations for the proposed Scandinavian Defense Union (SDU), since Norway wanted it linked to the West, Sweden wanted a neutral SDU, and Denmark just wanted the negotiations to succeed. Once the SDU talks failed, Denmark saw no satisfactory alternative but to join Norway in signing on as a NATO Ally, while Sweden held faith in non-alignment backed by its strong military. Finnish President Paasikivi saw only one response to Soviet pressure that would leave Finnish sovereignty intact, and that was to appease the Soviets by signing a Finnish-Soviet pact in 1948 that guaranteed Finnish neutrality from both the Soviet Union and NATO.

While Denmark and Norway have generally not expressed any regret about abandoning non-alignment in favor of NATO membership, Finland and Sweden have had

no significant reason to think they would have been better off joining NATO. Indeed, the Finnish and Swedish political blocs that argue for continued non-alignment today have plenty of reasons to argue that the policy served them well throughout the Cold War and beyond. While the apparent success of non-alignment since the Second World War may cause many in these two countries to cling to the policy, there is no reason to think that NATO membership would not have served Sweden just as well after the war, as it did for Denmark and Norway. Furthermore, as discussed in this thesis, neutrality failed to keep Finland out of the Winter War or the Second World War, and even Sweden was forced to partially abandon neutrality during the war in order to avoid provoking Berlin. Consequently, both countries have experienced the failures of the policy in the past and have reasons not to fully trust it in the future.

While Soviet aggression did not push Finland or Sweden into NATO at the start of the Cold War, regional geopolitics have changed to such an extent that the new round of Russian aggression and apparent expansionism may finally do so. At a minimum, recent Russian actions have pushed the Nordic countries to work more closely together under Nordic Defense Cooperation (NORDEFECO) and renewed the NATO membership debates within the Finnish and Swedish governments and societies.

Given that, according to the research presented in this thesis, NATO would probably accept Finnish and Swedish applications for membership, large portions of their populations want to join NATO, and the political leadership in at least one of the two countries (Sweden) is likely to change to a pro-NATO party in the next election, in addition to persisting Russian aggression, it seems likely that the countries will join NATO in the next decade. Additionally, if Russia provoked a crisis in the Baltic region or attacked a European Union (EU) or NORDEFECO member, Finland and Sweden would almost certainly seek membership in (and protection from) NATO. However, Russia's exact actions are impossible to predict, and Finland and Sweden will not take a decision to join the Alliance lightly, so it is not certain that they will eventually become NATO Allies.

While it remains to be seen if Finland and Sweden will seek membership, it would greatly benefit the United States if they did. As described in Chapter IV, Finland

and Sweden joining the Alliance would greatly strengthen NATO's ability to deter and defend against a Russian attack in the Nordic or Baltic regions, thereby reducing the chance that the United States have to deal with a major conflict involving Russia. Additionally, Finland and Sweden would be security contributors in the Alliance, strengthening NATO's overall military capabilities and, in turn, the United States' largest and most important military alliance.

In order to best encourage these two strategically located and heavily involved Partnership for Peace (PfP) participants to finally join the Alliance as members, the most important thing the United States must do is avoid providing any formal or informal security guarantees to Finland or Sweden and continue to make it clear that NATO collective defense guarantees apply only to Allies. This will prevent any cultivation of the notion that the countries might be able to secure most of the benefits of joining the Alliance, including U.S. protection, without committing themselves to protecting other NATO Allies or affecting their relations with Moscow. Additionally, the U.S. State Department should engage with the Finnish and Swedish governments and encourage them to apply for membership in the Alliance. False rumors and misinformation regarding what NATO membership would entail are circulating in the public domains of these countries that could be countered by encouraging public debates based on the government reports that each of these countries has recently sponsored. Finally, the United States should encourage the Alliance to continue allowing Finland and Sweden to participate in PfP activities and further integrate themselves into the organization's framework, as this will increase their familiarity with the Alliance and accustomize their populations to the idea of working closely with NATO. Over time, this close partnership will probably make more Finns and Swedes comfortable with abandoning the neutrality they were raised to rely on in favor of the NATO protection that Russian aggression makes clear they need.

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